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OBITUARY

It is with the deepest feelings of regret that we have to announce the loss to the Poetry Society of one of its oldest members and most valued friends, Mr. Edward Vandermere Fleming, who passed away peacefully but suddenly on Saturday, October the 18th. The Society loses one of the best loved and most active members of its Council, and the world of letters a lovable personality of unfailing charm and distinction.

Edward Vandermere Fleming was born on March 31st, 1869, and his life was a crowded one of achievement in the world of letters and in that of public affairs. He was a foundation scholar of St. Pauls School, and from there went on to Caius College, where he won the Chancellor's Gold Medal for an original Latin poem. He won the Tankerton scholarship. Soon after leaving Cambridge he entered the Civil Service and from 1924 to 1929 held the post of Assistant Under-Secretary of State for War. He was made Officier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1920, and Companion of the Bath in 1925. He was a member of the General Committee of the Research Defence Society and for more than twelve years a member of the Executive Council of the Poetry Society. He published in 1931 a philosophical pamphlet on the "Science of Shaving" which was subsequently translated into Dutch; and in 1934 appeared his best-known volume of poems, "Waters of Affliction"—fundamentally a moving threnody on the death of his wife. He was a contributor to various periodicals, and was a witty and fluent extempore speaker. He had travelled much in Germany, France and Italy and travel had well seasoned a mind which ranged with ease and precision from the classics to P. G. Wodehouse—his favourite author he once told me.

More than all these things to me, he was my friend of many years standing and I grieve for his loss. He was my Chairman when I first read my poems at the old Poetry Society premises in Russell Square, and I still remember how delightfully he put me at my ease in my new and strange surroundings. I remember this with affection; and the evenings spent at his home in talk about books and the vagaries of modern poetry, his constant kindliness, his unfailing humour, his sincere and lovable joy in his latest epigram, always worth hearing.

I remember some not inappropriate lines from his "Waters of Affliction." Let him then speak last:—

> "But let whoever held me for a friend
> Write on a card two words, a name,
> To go alone with me into the flame:
> The fire will those kind loving farewells blend
> With me, and make them of my dust a part.
> Their ashes, since by that fierce furnacing
> I shall be shrunken to a tiny thing,
> Will lie not far from that which was
> my heart."—*E. Vandermere Fleming.*

T. W. RAMSEY, *Chairman.*

EDITORIAL:

The Catholic View

Cannot we cease railing at the moderns? Many readers of this journal are accustomed to hearing that modern poetry is obscure, that it does not give pleasure, that it lacks form, etc., but for our integrity's sake let us take stock of our opinions, remembering that the poets who have formed our great and ancient tradition were at one time "modern," equally frowned upon by their contemporary die-hards. Nothing can make us love what we cannot love, but we can come to appreciate what is made manifest to us without losing faith with our innermost convictions. Let us read and consider with open minds what the modern poets are writing, so that if we approve or condemn, we do so with dignity.

The word "obscure" is a convenient one that a superficial or dishonest critic might apply to any poem he fails to understand. Modern poetry, with all its varying orders, differs from traditional poetry, alike with its myriad categories, but not, as many believe, in any essential feature, or it is not true poetry. What differs is the complexion of theme which in any poem dictates form and idiom. Inspired by even a timeworn subject, the modern poet must cast it in the mould of his own experience, producing a poem in his own image, differing only in aspect from that of his predecessors. Modern poetry often describes circumstances of the subconscious mind, its desires, fears and intricate symbolic exploits (not to be confused with the celebration of emotional phenomena, so happily handled by the greatest poets) and this is the largest bone over which the Traditionalist contends with the Modernist. The exploration of the subconscious mind is comparatively new and the psychological approach to poetry revolutionary; psychologists know that civilized humanity shrinks from confronting most aspects of its subconscious self. Let us not, therefore, protest too much lest we reveal what emotions we fear to acknowledge or indicate what images we dare not contemplate. Let us distrust the vicious, shrill, almost hysterical denunciation of an "obscure" poem until we are satisfied that it is indeed the poem which is nebulous and not the vision of the accuser, involuntarily withdrawn from a blinding, significant light.

Then it is said that modern poetry does not give pleasure. Attuned to poetry which seduces immediately, we do not concede a more intricate poem the estate and prerogative of the subtler lover, allowing it to woo us diversely until we are unexpectedly possessed; but like an ingenue we find its nice methods tedious because upon first reading, the poem does not "give pleasure." Since when, in any case, was it more than an incidental function of art to give pleasure? The English language is not so

impoverished that we must apply to aesthetic experience the epithet wherewith we would describe a baby's comforter. Much of the greatest of poetry, music and art give us no pleasure, no peace, no happiness; rather do they storm and besiege us, breaking us asunder, until we, bewildered creatures, recognise their inhuman and infallible attributes identifying them with the adamantine pebble of divinity which persists in our deepest core.

If the form of a poem is vassal to the theme, the critic is not justified in condemning form as such, but it is his duty to decry an incompatible form (and to denounce complete formlessness.) To cry havoc upon the verbal and metrical structure of a poem without having studied its content is to put the cart before the horse and the critic must take the trouble to discriminate between the poet who has something to say and says it within the limits of a certain form and the writer who has discovered a form and has sought something to say in it, nor must he be deceived into believing that an apparently unnecessary break with structural convention, however slight, is a pretension of the poet, and not a mark of technical competence. For instance when Auden writes:

> O what weeps is the blood that hears an
> Accident occurring in its substance.

it might be argued that Auden might as well have placed the word "an" in the obvious place, that is, before "accident," without upsetting the metre, but the little word placed at the end of the line is a deterrent, so that we cannot know immediately what the blood hears, but must wait until the beginning of the next line, and this gives us an impression of our having listened for it and to the word "accident" the significance of Everyman's betrayal. Thus, technique is essential and we must not judge the form of a poem, however unconventional, until we have ascertained what technique is embodied therein, and to what purpose.

Rhythm comes naturally to the poet, and his poem dances, hops, plods or drags its chains, according to its burden and all the imagery in Paradise will not make a poem if the creator is not endowed with a sense of rhythm and the technical skill to apply it. Herbert Corby, a modern poet who has sent us his book *Time in a Blue Prison* (Fortune Press) uses rhythm, imagery and technique with vulpine subtlety so that we are not at once aware of any of these factors, which is as it should be. In an accompanying letter, he says "My R.A.F. wasn't populated entirely by film star pilots and gentlemanly heroes and for no-one will I falsify the fact." There is no falsification, either way. The Blue Prison of Herbert Corby's R.A.F. uniform could not have incarcerated him so much as the drilled, disciplined men for whom he speaks, who fought and lived together stiffly and uniformly, as if they had no insides. We would like to quote in entirety the saddest poem in the book which begins,

Circe could wander here with all her swine
Wide-faced, and not one man would turn aghast
As things from her uncouth dominion passed . . .

and the loveliest,

Come, Isabella, come here to my side,
The women have put blossoms in thy hair . . .

but here is the most shattering

THE DOOMED

Whorled on his fatal face
  The bitter fingerprints of doom
Show where the hand took but released
  Him:
Bright on his maddened hair
  Rain pearls her obsequies:
The cell-white lineaments of fear
  Are his:
And in those inner-seeing eyes
  The geography of blood and nerves
Cuts fear upon your face
  Like knives.
Do not talk. His words will ring
  In the emptied room of memory
Starker than song.
  Oh, he,
Of all men born to woman most lacked light.
  He will be known
Forever as one of demented night
  And sobbing stone.

It is significant that there is not a poem in this book which does not owe something to the best tradition of English poetry. Let it be known to adherents of the Olympians that the new poets are in no small sense disciples of the old, recording their generations' anguish and loves for the perusal of the posterity for whom they, in turn, will no doubt nurture a similar contempt.

We are not likely to forget the resounding names in literature. Never before have Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, Tennyson, etc., been so discussed, nor have so many different approaches to their mighty work been investigated. Donne and Blake have come into their own, proclaimed by constant quotation, and reference, and by the treatises and critical essays which appear frequently.

We appreciate the mind and genius of Blake more than any previous century and we shall offer him honour by quoting.

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm.

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy;
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

To express the heart-stab of compassion in the simplest of statement was Blake's way.

Shakespeare is daily on our lips. Donne has his honour in the best of T. S. Eliot. We are dizzy from the intellectual heights of Browning and silenced by Tennyson's golden tongue. The poet of to-day is rich in heritage and cannot but count his new idiom a compound of what has gone before, just as the language in which he writes has Saxon, Greek, Roman, Viking and Norman for ingredient.

If we devote less space to the resounding names than to the unsung, it is because the Mighty need no defence.

MURIEL SPARK.

THE TOWER

Where the tower stood is dust and destruction,
Dust and a foreign land.
Foreign footsteps sound in its courtyards,
Foreign helmets shadowed on its broken walls.

I have lived in that tower long ago,
Seen the outgoing armies and the triumphs;
I have heard the footsteps of the first traitors
Along the unguarded passageways.

The battlements faced outwards;
It was a sick corruption at the heart
That spread it open to the sea-birds,
Brought the lichen and the pendant folded bats,
Crumbled the stones and planted crawling weeds.

I do not know why I haunt that tower still,
Where all the speech is foreign speech,
And all the Gods strange Gods.
There is no land my land.

R. P. LISTER.

TWO POEMS

BY

JEAN KENWARD

SONG FOR DAVID

Rest not secure, my love, in those
Divine attributes of the rose
For Time will quietly assail
Each separate feature, and prevail.

Neither be curious to find
How wantonly the blood can wind
Its brilliant circuit, but beware—
Decay will leave his favours there;

Whether he welcome be or no
He'll bid the pulse more frailly go
Delight become subservient
And you, my sweet, obedient.

Then Death shall jealously compare
The lavish brow, the yellow hair,
And in his secret motions prove
How closely he's akin to love.

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

"What country, sir?" The coast of Sleep
And these—the mountains of delight
That with hospitable arms make broad
The boundaries of night.

Sudden their jutty peaks, and steep
The curious breast of granite seems
To strangers following a faint
Calligraphy of dreams;

And those who gaze, and those who climb
Passing the moon upon her wane
Shall never go familiarly
In streets of stone again,

Nor in the lap of peace lie down,
Nor pluck the frail and scented fern
From fields of thorn where it would blow—
Nor to their loves return.

REYERTA

(Brawl of Spanish Gipsies)

Translated from the Spanish of Federico Garcia Lorca.

BY ROY CAMPBELL

In the depths of the ravine
Glinting Albacete* blades,
Beautified with rival bloods,
Flash like fishes in the shades.
A hard, flat light of playing-cards
Outlines, against the bitter green,
Shapes of infuriated horses
And profiles of equestrian mien.
Within the shadow of an olive
Weep two women bent with age,
While the bull of altercation
Clambers up the walls with rage.
Black angels come with handkerchiefs
And water from the snowline boulders,
Angels with huge wings (like the blades
Of Albacete) on their shoulders.
Juan Antonio, from Montilla,
Down the slope goes rolling dead
With his flesh struck full of lilies,
A sliced pomegranate for his head.
And now the cross of fire ascends
Along the highways of the dead.

The Judge and Civil Guard their way
Across the olive-orchards take
Where slithered blood begins to moan
The dumb song of an injured snake.
—"Gentlemen of the Civil Guard,
The same old story as before!
Five of the Romans have been killed
And of the Carthaginians—four."—
The raging afternoon of fig-trees
And sultry murmurs, ending soon,
Fell down across the wounded thighs
Of the wild horsemen, in a swoon.
Black angels fly across the wind
From whence the setting sun departs,
Angels with long streaming tresses
And oil of olives on their hearts.

* Albacete, a city which is today as famous for the manufacture of knives and daggers as Toledo used to be for that of rapiers.

TWO POEMS

BY

VIVIAN LOCKE-ELLIS

WATCHWOMAN OF THE NIGHT

Watchwoman of the Night, O gypsy Jane,
Here, at this hour, to keep your faith with me,
Fling back that filmy cloak and veil of lawn,
Persuade me that it is your eyes I see,
Walking with me these midnight paths again
Till you shall comb your hair of stars at dawn.

Rest with me, Sister, when the night grows old,
As once in Pharoah's House they spread the feast,
And nine muses made music manifold
Till at your sleepy sign those whispers ceased.

And it was daylight then, and all those hours
The while I went my ways you lay in dreams,
And what they told you, they,—Mnene, and she,
Urania, your Familiar of the Line,
And what they told you—and to tell to me—
Waking at sundown on a litter deep
In green and that bewilderment of flowers,
Albeit by Nilus then, Nilus his streams,
And now by Thames his tower and hoary keep,
—Waking at sundown out of sorcerie,
To tell me now, and join your paths with mine,
And be again the partner of my sleep.

THE GREAT SHIP

Distance, where distance pales,
Where fleets on shrouded waters ride, and clouds are sails,
Not, not so far,
The ship of my last sailing fills the waterside,
Her lamp the white day-star,
By night a brush mark on a lapping tide
Through darkness darkly lit.

At last, this last, bereft
As of a great ship's company,
But one, or two, or three,
Are they are left,
—Almost alone, since most are gone,
See, from the harbour master's window, see
The great ship, only it,
It and the eyeless pilot and the nameless one.

TWO POEMS

BY

ARNOLD VINCENT BOWEN

INVOCATION TO AUTUMN

Tarry awhile thou great and golden sail
Of sober autumn, tarry awhile. O stay
High-poised aloft on awful, hovering heights
Where still late-summer lightnings flicker and play
Along the margin of the heaven's highway.

Longsince, June's royal robe of mantling blue
Faded amid the bright midsummer bowers,
And quiet turquoise took the winds wherethrough
Mistily shine these few unvanquished flowers
Where fallen leaves lie veined and webbed with dew.

Summer's faint shape still limns at flight of day
These solemn landscapes,—as in dying fires
The darling image slowly fades away,
By Pleasure's freakish imagination made
From ancient intimations, old desires.

Now while time fades, and I along with time,
Enough of beauty still remains to sing
With accent unexcessive, and such rhyme
As seasoned ears find not uncomforting.
Above my world, my life, my time, I spread
Like thine, a sail all lonely overhead.

Arnold Vincent Bowen *(continued)*

Tarry awhile thou great gold sail. Hang still
Above the folded future as a cloud
Lingers serene aloft the gathering night,
Poised on the forehead of some frightful hill
Left dark of stars and desolate of light.
Stay with me yet. Too soon from time's duress
Shalt thou be freed, and I from timelessness.

WINTER OF DISCONTENT

Leaves hurl and fly
Here where I wander
Under implacable winter.

I have lived long, lain long
Among lapidary seasons,
Floated in warm, blue water-fanes
Cusped with ethereal foliage
In diamond-dust forenoons and afternoons;
Breathed ambrosial evenings
In the fur-lined doublet of darkness
Where the lion and lotus blend.

In Northern frosts and mist
Blood goes lately sullen;
Bones hang on icicled flesh;
The lotus and the lion are hostile,
Making ready to battle
Where brittle leaves hurl and fly.

Aching, aching I wander
Under implacable winter.

CHRISTMAS-TREE

BY

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

Babe timber-nursed: Child nurtured at rough wood:
Youth rhythmed by hammer-blows, the saw thy song:
Straight edge, straight aim, for body and soul's good;
Truth's track straight-drawn through a world's twisted wrong;
Till, at the end—hammer and wood again—
Death's cross-ways, and the godlike choice of pain.

Tree-nurtured and tree-natured: sown in time,
Earth-hugging roots and sky-exploring boughs;
Leaves blown to speech by the breathed Spirit sublime;
Thy heart, cool shadow where all griefs may house;
Branch-hung with gifts, which are the fruits of love:
Givers of life to who so eats thereof.

Each, too, a tree—each after his own kind;
Each of his timber grower and fashioner, too:
The twisted thorn, envious, and stooped, and blind;
The straight-trunked pine straight-aimed at Heaven's blue;
And to each one the ultimate choice: to be
Wood of thy Manger, or thy Calvary.

POEM

BY

HERBERT CORBY

By the fantastic colonnades the amber
  Lioness strides, dissolving through her shadow.
Painting the arched arena now, the flambeaux
  Gutter above the walls, their faces hidden
For the imperial passion, the blue blood like water.
  Across the sanded plateau, hooked like furies,
Move ape, the horned dwarf, and the gladiator:
  The tar like blood drips blandly from the torches.

She waits for him, where shadows faint and flourish,
  And wear themselves upon her cloak like flowers:
It seems the flickering city burns, though only
  The torches and the wounded lions are eerie.
She waits. Stars turn. She is not told till morning
  Whose lives those torches were, whose faith was burned there.

TWO SONNETS

BY

JOHN GRADDON

I

There is a sanctuary where wishes feed
On mirrored apples green with youth and there,
Projected as a lance of light, I share
The favours of the moon. The perfumes need
No altar bare, nor sacrifice to lead
A myriad stumbling hearts within a scare
Of ritualled words. Without a childish care
The black distorted night becomes a creed.

Yet I will pray that you will never come
To shock the willowed shadows with an act.
Fulfilment is a catalyst too strong
For immortality to bear; yet some
Forget the worm of time beyond the fact,
That lies intently coiled and waits not long.

II

Possessed, within the dark transparency
That lies, an unseen veil of grave desire,
Bereaving common life of form and fire
I burn; and serve this stranger constancy
Than mortal made, time placed embroidery.
Yet the revolving world, backstaging choir,
Must chaunt for me, must monstrously conspire
The Absolute, beyond all clemency.

Then will I take you like a folded dove,
And mix a magic with the whimpering loon,
And hide the sharpest star within your breast.
Then the eternal dust will have one love,
The everlasting dark will throw a moon
On seas to show, of all the waves, one crest.

TRIBUTE TO "EAST COKER"

This was the first pebble I ever saw,
Upon those shores washed by the lyric waves,
Where grains of sand on rounded boulders draw,
And winds play music on the open caves.
It lay amidst the fruits of calm and rage,
That were delivered by the rhythmic tides
Through all the years—to be our heritage—
Reflecting still their glory from its sides.
Though I have held it, turned it in my hand,
Seen how it found its ocean-fashioned face,
And was engrained by driven silver sand,
In some new way no previous age could trace,
Its beauty with the years shall not deline,
Nor shall it be dissolved by tears of brine.

D. J. Millen.

THE OLD SONG

There is a song too full of loveliness,
Too full of tears for our imperfect reach,
Quintessence of all beauty, and the stress
Of wordless sorrow, speaking each to each
In first love's rigid rapture, while the few
And futile lyres of poesy are dumb.
I, who have loved, remember, and for you
Surely there's no forgetting when the sum
Of all our days is patterned in your mind
And all their skies return. Then do you hear
The ever-pleading whispers in the wind
That calls beyond the blinds of yesteryear.

Young is the song, and older than our youth
Which laughed at falsehood as it weeps at truth.

Norman C. Pallant.

GALATEA

"Speak, Galatea, tell me of your dream
About your coming, ere your vision woke."

"I seemed to gather from the near and far,
From distance and from distance: from the sea
Where deep goes down to deeper; from the air
By filaments invisible in the sky;
And from the core of earth. I sapped the nerves
Of things that swim, that creep, or walk or fly;
And from a multitude of breathing souls
I drew sensation and percipience,
Until my ivory breast began to pulse,
And in my tingling toes and finger-tips
And over all my chilly naked skin
Spread kindling warmth . . . I opened to the light
To see your eyes, as at my lips your fire
Lit all my centred being with a kiss.
Ah, kiss me still, my Maker, kiss me still,
Touch me with flame, then clothe me in your arms;
Come, beat against my bosom with your heart,
And stroke me with your soft and delicate hands;
For so I live, and only so I live!
My King and my Beloved, hold me thus,
Hold me, Beloved, lest I slip from you
Lost in the ways I came; Beloved, hold,
Lest coldness seize me, and in caverns dim
I lose myself and wander, and once more
My form be frozen hard. Sweet love, I fear
Dissolving in those same far-branching veins
Where I was born! Keep me, Beloved, here
In this our resting-place, this shelter, home.
I have no life but yours, no wealth to give
But beauty of your making, and my love:
Tell me again you love me, and will keep;
For, should I merge into the infinite,
Dear one, how could you find me in the dark?"

He soothed her tears, and all the nuptial night
Her dewy breath was fragrant on his cheek.

CHARLES J. ROWE.

BUTTERCUPS

This bright wide evening is the earth alight
and splashed with gold, field upon field,
that seems must be unconquered even by the night,
or only be a treasure by the darkness sealed.

The cows stand knee-deep in luxuriance,
bemused and drunk with golden meals,
infiltrated in each glowing liquid glance,
in rippling skin that every move reveals.

These flowers are indeed the crown of spring,
bright beyond belief, and golden as the hour;
incarnate of the sun whom every living thing
adores as lord,—the word of life made flower.

MOLLY GILBERT.

LISTENING TO MOZART

Here in this loft,
From this high window
Where the doves walked,
Stepping lightly on the sill,
Stepping politely,
Grey-blue feathers in the snow,
I have watched the nights grow full,
Seen stars in a frame of ebony,
Blue-bright in an aching sky.
Here my dream-fragments, born of music,
Wove a pattern with the doves' feet in the snow;
And from the cones of silence
Where a shapeless question turns,
I have felt sudden tenderness
Come cool and sweet,
To melt my little agonies,
To lift, with the dove's wing,
My pain.

JOAN OGDEN.

LONELINESS

I must go back
To the wastelands of my dark unpeopled dreams
From wild rushing bells of sound; I must go back
Like the shrill crescendo of the wind, to death.

When today's words are later thought-harvested,
You will tear up the papers of memories
Turning from my presence; you will laugh
And laughter kills love that fed my eagerness.

I must go back;
My petals are fading brown, they droop and curl
With the pain of death; my shattered flower sleeps
In the midst of the seeping tides of loneliness.

PAMELA CONSTANTINE.

APPEAL

The lilt of our English tongue is a song for the singing;
A delicate lyre for the hands of the makers of song.
Touch gently, my brothers, the strings where the hands of the masters
Have wandered so long.

THEODORA ROSE.

THE WINGS OF TIME

(For W.d.I.M.)

Mingled within the shadows of his mind,
Bright colours form the pattern of the past.
Weaving for him an arras of mankind,
Whose never ceasing search for truth will last
Through all the ages of life's ebb and flow.
He was the sunburnt boy with tumbled hair
Who grew, and played, and loved, who toiled to know
The sanctity of faith, the peace of prayer—
Ethereal music this of memories fleeting
A simple song yet how profound and clear,
Telling of sunlit days and lovers meeting,
And knowledge that the one he loved was near.
Now in the fading of this hour sublime
He folds within himself the wings of Time.

AURIOL GRAYSON.

SONG

Love that is bound has gone
With the late alchemy of stars at dawn
  Affirming as they die
  What day's accustomed clarities deny.

Love that is lost remains
With the green advent of next season's rains
  That start the trees to flower
  Through their impetuous, unreported hour.

ROSAMUND STANHOPE.

MIRACLE

Heavy with sleep, angry at being wakened
At such an hour, and in the street below
It seemed all Bethlehem talked, curious, through casements
They looked, and saw only a star's bright glow—
Watched it a while—went back to bed, no doubt,
Wondering what the excitement was about!

STANLEY STOKES.

THE INFINITE PURPOSE

How many Buddhas and Mahomets breathed
To balance beauty on a Lotus flower?
How many dungeons and Dunkirks contrived
To give the radiance to a petal's light?
How many harmonies and discords blent
To weave into the white robe of the Christ
The rainbow flowers of immortality?

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

SYLVIA

A Sonnet Sequence

BY

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I

Sylvia is chaste and snow is in her eyes
When glacial shyness makes her gestures cold;
Then, like the rose, her evening petals fold
Denied caressing winds from paradise.
Now, heart of mine, awake your sleeping will
And send love ringing to my lady's breast,
To start the throbbing of a warm unrest
When trembling echoes plead my master skill.

As bolts of dreams are softly, swiftly drawn
And hymns of love go winging round her world
So, like the sun which breaks the gate of dawn,
Her heart shall answer as a rose unfurled:
Then Sylvia's love and mine shall melt the snows
And bring the scent of Eden to the rose.

2

Sylvia is sad and sea-mist veils her eyes
When evening shadows haunt her wistful way,
Then, like the dusk, her gold is tinged with grey
And all her banners droop as daylight dies.
Yet stars of love shine through the veiling clouds
And spear with silver threads the gathering night,
To spur in rapture to a new delight,
Weaving a gown of dreams from sable shrouds.

For in the magic of the midnight hour
When stardust spangles the snow-drift of sleep,
My star shall find the silent, secret bower
To which her soul withdrew that it might weep:
Then Sylvia's heart shall cast night's cloak away
And sing in rhapsody till break of day.

3

Sylvia is gay with glory in her eyes;
Her springtime pathway shines, a burnished gold,
For, at the dawn, a magic bell was tolled
Bidding the birds of day arise, arise;
To learn the message of the fading night
When stars of promise lingered by her bed
And whispered to her bronze-gold dreaming head;
"Here is the daybreak of your dream delight;

Now every flower pays homage to the rose;
The snows are gone; all sadness drains away;
The world, suffused with love and wonder, glows;
He comes, he comes;—this is the epic day
When sun and stars re-echo nuptial songs
And Sylvia's heart awakes where it belongs."

THAT THE DEAD MAY REST

Since we have tired of shouting for joy of Victory,
And the stars are pale in the dawn of another day,
Shall we return, each one, to our separate homesteads
Another way?

It is not thus man will build him a City Glorious,
Hiding alone his individual prize,
But a common faith for a common cause will vanquish
And a new Saint arise.

Let the shouting die and the tears and tumult be ended,
Together we fought or fell at War's behest,
Let us build together a world for our children's children
That the dead may rest.

L. E. BRODIE.

LONG SHIP

I am the Foam Wolf, I am the Sea Horse,
I am the War Boat of Leif Ericsson:
Leif the Viking's Son, Leif the far farer,
I am Leif's Long Ship, the hardy sea captain.

Long Serpent is my name, swift as the swan;
Black are my sides as the wing of the Raven;
Thirty-two oars have I, white shafts of ash,
Thirty-four Vikings' shields hang on my rails.

Spurn I the billows, breast I the breakers,
Scudding to windward, the storm witch before;
Silent I glide in the mists of the dawn,
Slide like a snake to the plash of my oars.

Westward I carry them, Sons of the Sea Kings,
Over the Whale's way, over the Swan's bath,
West over sea beyond the Sun's setting,
Westward to Vinland, to Markland I drive.

Thorgrimr Karlsefni steers me surely,
Thorgrim the sword wielder, right hand of Leif.
Northmen, Icelanders, men of the Fjords,
These are my crewsmen, byrnie-clad heroes.

Sail we together where never have men
Sailed before to the lands of the West.
There found we strangers who scattered before us,
Tall trees and meadows, swift running waters.

Thorgrimr gat me on his returning,
Sailed in me many a fame-earning cruise;
Sailed in me too at last to Valhalla;
Buried was I with him in his howe.

Skáll to Ericsson! Skáll to Thorgrimr!
Skáll to the Vikings, far faring, hardy!
Skáll to Long Serpent, Sea Horse of heroes!
Skáll to the builder though luck he may lack!

INGOLF ARNARSSON.

THE EIGHTH SIGN

Be always flame in my darkness, fire in my heart,
  Let not the long years that stride past in marching battalions,
Let not the cruising icebergs of time rive us apart.

The image-revealing gods, the silver medallions
  That bind up the wild gipsy garland of camphire,
The backward-leaning dance, the glance and the dalliance

Of wine and the bronze cathedral over the camp fire
  Stretch long fingers around us, melt the ice-floe,
Bring down the polar caps to a curtain of drumfire.

Calm, beneficent, water stilling and wise though
  The eyes of love may be and his stature tremendous
As earth-supporting shoulders of Atlas—the white snow

Melts not for calm or for force but for warmth of the blood; Love –
      ah lend us
  Rain bearing south gales yet to break open the heart:
Let the great waters from dryness of Saturn defend us!

T. W. Ramsey.

THE TOWER

There is a tower,
A tortured place in which all time contends,
That bends, and still withstands.

There is a tower standing in a field,
A barren field among the barren fields
About the bending tower.

My own unrest uprears itself a tower
Contending with long time in fields in flower.

Kenneth Hopkins.

NEW CONTEMPORARY POETRY

Reviewed by HOWARD SERGEANT

Indian Landscape, R. N. Currey (Routledge, 5s.); *If Pity Departs,* Robin Atthill (Dakers, 5s.); *The Heart's Townland,* Roy McFadden (Routledge, 5s.); *Wind on Charnwood,* Bruno Walker, O. C. R. (privately published); *Rambling North,* Thomas Greenhalgh (privately published, 2s.); *Love is my Enemy,* Vernon Knowles (Hammond, Hammond & Co., 6s.); *Dust Devils,* N. H. D. Spicer (privately published); *Miscellany Poems,* Kenneth Hopkins (The Grasshopper Press); *The Missel Thrush,* Eleanor Thorne (The Exposition Press, New York, $2); *America Mine,* Merrill Maynard (Boston Book Fellows, Boston, Mass.); *Lament for Strings,* Wrey Gardiner (Grey Walls Press, 6s.); *Traveller's Eye,* Bernard Gutteridge (Routledge, 5s.); *A Garland for Florence,* Pietro d'Avalone (Pentagon Press, 5s.); *Sea Acres,* Arthur Ball (Peter Ratazzi, 2s. 6d.); *Poems of the Passionate East,* P. R. Kaikini (New Book Co., Bombay, Rs. 2/-); *The Hungry Grass,* Donagh MacDonagh (Faber & Faber, 7s. 6d.).

The main object of *Indian Landscape* is, in the author's words, "to present a descriptive record" of his three years in that vast and enigmatic sub-continent—that is precisely what the book does and little more. It is, then, irrelevant to complain that Mr. Currey rarely shows that quality of imagination one might expect of the poet in his approach to life. Having warned us that he has intentionally excluded poems which pass political judgment, he produces a sort of coloured scrap-album of an experience which, to rely upon his work, was both superficial and uninspiring. Too often he descends into mere reportage. If one accepts that, together with the absence of any philosophical conclusions, one hopes to find, at least, some lively emotive stimulus or imagery. Unfortunately neither is much in evidence, and Mr. Currey drops easily into the use of such cliches as "men like skeletons" and "as old as sin". Occasionally he gives an indication of his possibilities:

> "These desert goats inherit the grave poise
> And carriage of their masters; flowing robes
> Protect impartially from sun and wind
> And the hard morning cold in which men squat
> Huddled round fires under low stone walls;
> Their trousers are as wide as those designed
> To hide the New Messiah; matted beards
> Cover their eyes in shifting tides of sand.

They hold their heads up like the prows of ships
Through cactus reefs and whirlpool coils of sand;
Their antique figureheads are crudely turned,
Their long and lanky ears hang down like ropes;
To-night their clustered horns above the thorn
Are sloping masts beneath the Muslim moon."

From the editor of an "all-India" anthology (and this is the second collection of the author's own work) the undeveloped technique of *Indian Landscape* is surprising, and the calling forth of the whole hierarchy of Hindu gods does nothing to redeem it.

Mr. Robin Atthill's poems have been appearing in the leading literary periodicals for some time. Separately, they made pleasant and interesting reading, and one admired the poet's sense of restraint; collected in a volume they are at a disadvantage. The quietness of his tone and his deliberate avoidance of pronounced rhythmical stress tend to make them slightly monotonous. He is an extremely sensitive poet and should be taken in small doses; then the spiritual implication of his thought becomes at once effective:

"Friendship is beyond words; dear friends
scattered to the sweltering world's end
of Asia, or where the tropic night falls
melodramatically on Abyssinian hills—

these are nearer to the heart, more real
than whom we brush against in the day's turmoil
of the casual streets; they need not fear
the compelled severance and silence of the war."

Rhyme and half-rhyme are applied with skill and it is noticeable how much their use strengthens his work. This is Mr. Atthill's first book and it holds promise of his future development.

Since the end of the war many promising young poets seem to have lost their impetus. The transitional stage is a difficult one and only those who have real poetic talent will emerge from the present-day confusion. After the achievement of his *Swords and Ploughshares* and *Flowers for a Lady*, Mr. Roy McFadden's new book, *The Heart's Townland*, shows a marked deterioration which we hope is merely temporary. It contains few poems with any arresting force and certainly none to compare with, say, *The Water and the Stones* or *Cuchulainn* of his earlier books. At his best he turns a pleasing phrase or two:

"He was a tree that threw a swinging arm
Across the taut string of a thoroughfare;
Conjured sunlight out of dust, and found
The heart in all things; called out of the air
Bright birds of adoration: he was warm
As sunlight freeing fenced forbidden ground."

(*Portrait of a Poet*)

but he is seldom even on this level. What is most distressing is that the defects are those of the novice. One is entitled to expect a certain standard of craftsmanship from the established poet, and Mr. McFadden must not be allowed to palm us off with his second- and third-best. In this book there are examples of facile writing, weak repetition, overstatement and imprecision. He has what Angela Thirkell would describe as "a thing" about "things"; they appear at intervals—here are some of them: "mute, broken thing", "bright familiar things", "rooted things", "clear and intimate thing", "salmon-shimmering things", "heartholding-folding all things", "self-drenched, familiar things", "chaotic things", "watery things", "rootless things"—there is, in fact, far too much of this sort of thing (see how catching it is!)

The publishers boast that Mr. McFadden has few debts to other writers. That was true of his earlier work: does anyone recognise Hopkins?:

"Heartholder of the horizon's sweep,
Deep and steep of it, creek and cove and cave,
Wave and weave of it, lunge and leap
Of salmon-shimmering things, the grave
Plunge of the slender gull, light as sleep:

Only poetry can cast
Shape and sense upon the wilderness
Bewildering us, combing the last
Land- and sea- and sky-line; yes,
Heartholding-folding all things, furled wings, fast."

(*Heartholder*)

or imitation Comfort?:

"With every step we walk upon a grave.
The voices killed before their time are speaking,"

(*Manifesto*)

Mr. McFadden has, in the past, created some fine poems. It would be a dis-service to him and to his public if we failed to take him to task.

Wind of Charnwood is a competent book. Its author, Mr. Bruno Walker is concerned with spiritual values in a world which largely ignores its own necessities, and his work is on an intensely emotional level:

"At dew-fall, prompter than the gradual dawn,
I leave this where and when, to climb again
The hill-top where the world's true lover is slain
Redeeming time, deigning by death to adorn
His bride with life. There chasubled and forlorn
Of men, but clothed with, manipled with his pain—
Nay more than clothed—that mystic moment I reign
Christ, the world's Priest, the whole world's sorrow born
To God within me:"

This is a typical example of his poems which derive their main strength from his religious convictions. We believe that he has something to learn from Kathleen Raine and Norman Nicholson in the assimilation of such material.

The friends of Mr. Thomas Greenhalgh will, no doubt, welcome the appearance of his *Rambling North*, but outside that circle his small collection of verses will not enhance his reputation. Whilst one can respect his sincerity and share with him a love for nature, it is impossible to disregard the weakness of construction and phraseology:

"No more young throstle thou will float
Across the green or sing a note,
And it is sad, beside the wit,
To knowest of the cause of it:"

When Mr. Greenhalgh is less easily satisfied he will write verse of a more enduring quality.

Mr. Vernon Knowles, an Australian, is neither a misanthropist nor a disappointed lover, as the title of his book, *Love is my Enemy*, might suggest. He is a philosopher and a genuine poet. For him triumph deceives, love satiates, beauty fades, and even truth is elusive:

"The lights by which I conn'd the page
Have been extinguished one by one,
And now in darkness I am left:
The text unseen, the task undone.

What hope is there that, while I wait,
Some unguessed star will take the sky,
And I shall learn, at last, the truths
Of how to live, and how to die?"

But he is never depressing and, in spite of his healthy pessimism, his book can be recommended for the courage it inspires and for the craftsmanship of its author. Mr. Knowles writes in traditional style but retains his essential individuality. At times he is almost moving:

"How will it be with me when you are gone?
I shall be turning here and turning there,
Wearing your absence like a hair-lined shirt:
The outward shewing so deceiving-fair,
But, inly, all my body through and through
Chafing with agony, deprived of you."

It is an acknowledged fact that books privately published by their authors usually reveal a lack of discrimination in selection; the authors, eager to see their work in print and without the necessity of satisfying a publisher, fail to exercise true critical judgment. *Dust Devils*, by N. H. D. Spicer is a rare exception and we must congratulate him upon this neatly-produced booklet. What defects there are appear in the war-poems, in which Mr. Spicer has permitted his personal emotions to lead him astray, but they are unobtrusive. And, rarer still in a poet these days, he has a sense of humour. His poem *Zodiac* appealed to us:

"I girt myself and journeyed far
To bring my lady-love a star,
The little star that shone so bright
Below the Southern Cross at night.
'Below, and slightly to the left'
She pointed with a finger deft,
A dainty finger tipped with red.
'Beloved, bring me that.' She said."

(The lover makes his way through the heavens, and after undergoing great dangers, returns)

"She looked so lovely lying there
The starlight gleaming in her hair.
I spilled my gift upon the floor,
Drew down the blind and locked the door:
With beating heart I whispered 'Dear,
The Star you coveted is here.'
She murmured 'Darling, back so soon?
I've changed my mind, I want the moon'."

In his Introduction to *Miscellany Poems* Mr. Kenneth Hopkins informs us that in this slim booklet he has collected the odd pieces which have been excluded for various reasons from his previous volumes. His apology

is quite unnecessary. Mr. Hopkins is an unpretentious poet with a habit of making significant statements in a casual manner that is most deceptive, and the lightness of his touch is a refreshing change after the heavy-handedness of some of his contemporaries. We would like to set his *Experience* beside that of Mr. Knowles:

"The first kiss tickles
The second teases
And after that
Every kiss pleases.

The first love tells
And the second teaches
And after that
Exquisite each is!"

The Missel Thrush by Eleanor Thorne, originally published in England, now appears under the imprint of The Exposition Press of New York. The publishers assert that the book "achieved wide recognition" in this country. This may be true, though the news did not reach us; in fact, we can find nothing in the book to justify such distinction. Here is a typical stanza:

"Tweet-twitter-sweet, 'tis indeed the sap's CHIRP,
I'll rhythm aloud to awaketh the day.
I'll slippeth away from the Derwent's brink,
Where Mary Gwent unto HIM hath her SAY."

The thrush does not exactly warble!

The Founder of the Braille Poets Guild, Mr. Merrill Maynard, is less confident of his poetic gifts in the foreword to his *America Mine*. He is even aware of the flaws which it contains and disarms his critics in advance. His verse, though not impressive in any way, is not without dignity.

Few modern poets have a deeper feeling for the lame dogs and outcasts of society than Mr. Wrey Gardiner. In the title-poem of *Lament for Strings* he writes from the heart:

"This unreal house
Is not my house
My home is under the tree
That hangs in the mind
Like a still crucifix
Of the world's wrong,
The wood of all our woe,
The anger of the blind."

It is this sensitivity to suffering and injustice which characterises the whole of his poetry and which, incidentally, accounts for the uneven quality of his earlier books. Always he identifies himself with his subject:

> "I am the prisoner in the tower,
> The man hanging beneath the tree,
> The eye of love, the feckless hand,
> Freedom from the ghastly hour."

Mr. Gardiner has not entirely eliminated the unwieldy sentences and the rich accumulation of poetic phrases; against that may be set the memorable lines which can be picked out from every page. At his purest he is indeed a lyrical poet:

> "Water-still is the shade of old Coppelius,
> Winding his toys alone in the empty room
> So soon to be filled with the poetry of light
> And white limbs listening at the enigmatic door.
>
> Water-silk are the dreams of old Coppelius,
> Lost in the attics of all the forgotten towns
> Of time, hazy with light of another century,
> Only the music now will bring out of the memory.
>
> Days are now dark and dreams are of the dying;
> No magic skill is lavished on the doll
> With the bright staring eyes and steps like light
> Shimmering on the quiet floor of our private world."
>
> (*Dr. Coppelius*)

Mr. Bernard Gutteridge has been writing since 1936 and *Traveller's Eye* is his first collection to be published. His choice of title emphasises his allegiance to the *New Verse* group of poets which flourished before the war and set up certain artificial standards for poetry, based principally on 'observation'. His book is divided into two sections: those written at home, and those written abroad between 1942-45. Unlike Mr. Currey, he has not confined himself to simple description; he looks beneath the surface and records in a few apt phrases both the scene and his own philosophical reactions:

> "The puppets that the children always left sprawling
> With pink, branchlike legs and golden sneering faces—"

> "Jumping like shrimps, clusters of thin brown children
> Quarter the road,"

The second section, exciting and colourful, throws into relief the calmer and more detached poems written in this country.

It has been said that a translation is like a woman—if it is beautiful it cannot be faithful, if it is faithful it cannot be beautiful—or words to that effect. We are not so rash as to pursue the accuracy of this comparison, but we are of the opinion that, as a general rule, translations fail to preserve the original freshness of the poet. *A Garland for Florence*, by Mr. Pietro d'Avalone, translated by Miss Mary B. Grant, does not persuade us to revise that opinion. We say this without any disrespect to the translator who has entered upon her difficult task in a spirit of sympathy and understanding. Nevertheless, there is an attractive note of simplicity throughout the book:

"Again you stir me
with your crystal eyes.
Why do they come—
beacons out of the past—
flashing their memories,
all unwise
terrible,
as love that will not last
and yet returns:"

(*Etruscan Twilight*)

Although the majority of the poems in *Sea Acres* are trivial in conception they are not without charm. Mr. Arthur Ball, the author, is a little too conscious of his own limitations and too inclined to restrict himself to a narrow field. There is nothing wrong with his vision—he is, perhaps naive at times—and we feel that he should attempt more. His keen eye for nature enables him to focus the intricate details of the scene for the benefit of his readers, and what he presents is a series of snap-shots—Caithness trees, a woman in the firelight, a child asleep, a bay in Cornwall, or an old fisherman—all carefully controlled. If he would only stand back and let the camera take in more than a single object or two we might obtain a more comprehensive picture. The title is appropriate:

"The sea
Is no lover.
Curdled in white spray,
Leaping,
White-toothed and green-harnessed,
She breaks
On the spikes of her own sorrow."

(*Sea Strife*)

It is an excellent grounding for the young poet to study the work of his predecessors, to profit from any discoveries they have made and to use the tools they have placed to his hand. When, however, one particular master

is selected for the purpose, to the exclusion of others, there is danger that the poet will become a pale imitation. We do not know what other masters Mr. P. R. Kaikini has taken—Mr. William Kean Seymour, in the last issue of *Poetry Review*, welcomed him (and we do not doubt the aptness) as the Indian MacNeice, bringing a "wind of stinging satire among the pastel landscapes of Tagore and Mrs. Naidu"—but in his recent *Poems of the Passionate East* there is no question that the predominating influence is that of Rabindranath Tagore. We can find little satire. Mr. Kaikini is a distinguished poet in his own right, working in a delicate medium. Whilst we acknowledge the lyrical beauty of his language and the mystical atmosphere he is able to create at will, we feel that, in this volume, he is overshadowed by Tagore.

Last, but by far the most important and most virile of the books under review is *The Hungry Grass* by an Irish poet, Mr. Donagh MacDonagh. From the first poem to the last in the book one's interest is retained, due probably, to the astonishing variety of the poet's range. He can be reserved or robust, elegiac or merry, taking all the moods in his stride with equal ease and leaving no doubt as to his craftsmanship.

> "There's little wildness in my city head
> Except when wind and rain tear off the lid
> And blow among the passions lying hid—"
> (*The Wind Blows*)

says the author, but readers can be assured that the wind and rain were at work during the creation of these poems. He is steeped in Irish history and frequently takes some historical incident as subject. The poems 'after the Irish' have a lively metre, combining tragedy with a sly humour in a manner characteristic of Mr. MacDonagh:

> "Drape every downcast day now in purple cloth of Lent,
> Smudge every forehead now with ash, that she may yet repent
> Who going to Mass last Sunday could pass so proudly by
> And show her mind was altered by the rolling of an eye."

This book will help to establish Mr. MacDonagh in this country as a poet of stature.

A MIXED ENCOUNTER

By William Kean Seymour

Portrait of Horace by Alfred Noyes, (Speed & Ward, 16s.); *A Chaucer Handbook* by Robert Dudley French, (G. Bell & Sons, 10s. 6d.); *A Spencer Handbook* by H. S. V. Jones (G. Bell & Sons, 10s. 6d.); *Paradise Lost and its Critics* by A. G. A. Waldock, (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d.); *The Poetry of the Brownings*, selected by Clifford Bax, (Muller, 10s. 6d.); *Prose and Poetry by Alice Meynell*, introduced by V. Sackville-West, (Cape, 15s.).

Horace is one of those ancients in poetry whose star waxes as the centuries grow dim. The explanation lies not alone in our schooldays, when reluctant youth is made to construe him, for that pedantic tyranny results so often in neglect and aversion; it lies rather in the perennially interesting and even fascinating form and substance of his Odes and Satires, as well as in the engaging portrait of himself that his works convey. For successive generations he is found to be an abundant lover of life, a pragmatist among poets who could blend the real with the ideal in a way that conduces to a sensible art of living. And he lived in one of the great ages of the world when, though tyranny and cruelty shaped the destinies of millions, there were systems of culture controlled by groups of artists and poets which shine and beckon to this day. Horace is one of those "brave lads in olden musical centuries," in Robert Louis Stevenson's haunting line, and we cannot imagine the perspective of poetry without him. The latest to pay him the tribute of enthusiastic biography and exposition is Mr. Alfred Noyes, whose *Portrait of Horace* (Sheed and Ward, 16s.) is a delightful combination of scholarship and hero-worship. Mr. Noyes is himself a poet who demands that a poem shall sing—and he of course finds what he demands in the immortal Odes. In his time Mr. Noyes has laid a lance in many combats; he remains unashamedly Tennysonian in his poetic preferences, and, though worsted by the fashions of our unquiet century, goes on fighting. Horace, we might think, needs no knight-errant, but Mr. Noyes will be that or nothing. He singles out those who have accepted Horace's own ironical self-description as a "hog from the herd of Epicurus" to chastise them with fact and interpretation. He selects those who think of Horace as a sycophant and time-server and lays about him in good measure if not always convincingly. Horace, let us admit it, wrote lines of unmixed adulation to Augustus, lines which are difficult to explain away. It was an age of tyranny and flattery, and with Octavian setting himself up as a demi-god at home and in his dominions Horace simply had to join in

the cult. Mr. Noyes may try to explain the fulsome lines by suggestions that the son of a freedman father had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote them, but the words remain and with (for me) no trace of irony in them. Horace, in this respect as in so many others, took the line of least resistance, and in a time of patronage and personal insecurity who shall blame him? The Ode was written, the Emperor and his toadies were satisfied, and Horace went on being Horace, in spirit and belief a republican who had served under Brutus with his hands newly imbrued in Caesar's blood), free to cultivate his Sabine farm, to know creative friendships such as he enjoyed with Virgil, to savour wine and recall the love of women, to unroll his Greek poets on their cedar scrolls, and to write, to *write*, which, in the last resort, is what a poet exists for. I, for one, ask no truer nor more sufficing picture of Horace than that. Augustus, Maecenas, Virgil, Cicero, Tibullus, Brutus, Antony and Cleopatra, they are all but named ingredients, with wine, with Lalage and Chloe, Cinara and Tyndaris (women's names that chime through the years) in the making of an immortal poet whom we needs must love. Mr. Noyes, in the glow of his convert-Catholicism, seems at times almost to wish to invest the old pagan with Christian principles (just as the Victorian Sir Theodore Martin regretted that Horace "had no divine law of duty to appeal to as we have") yet they are but touches in a biographical and critical study for which we must be profoundly grateful. Mr. Noyes's book is one that deserves an article in itself; it evokes the poet, the scene, the period, his art and his friends, and it is finely written.

Coming up through the centuries I welcome three books devoted respectively to Chaucer, Spenser and Milton, two from the scholarship of American professors and one that on Milton from a professor in the University of Sydney. So English poetry girdles the world! The first two are volumes in an excellent series which aims to cover the peaks and pageant of our glorious inheritance. Shakespeare and Milton have been included and the present volumes (now for the first time published in Great Britain) are *A Chaucer Handbook*, by Robert Dudley French, and *A Spenser Handbook*, by H. S. V. Jones (both sold in Great Britain by G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 10s. 6d. each). Each book contains over 400 pages and comprises a "Life," an exhaustive picture of England of the poet's period, successive chapters devoted to the work and parts in detail, chapters on language and versification, appendices, bibliographies and chronological tables. I mention these facts because so often the reviewer fails to give his reader (in a necessarily brief notice) any helpful indication of the scope and use of the book under review. These two are fully documented and seem to me to be admirably suited for advanced students of English literature. They have sifted and make conveniently available a whole mass of knowledge and evidence relating to two of England's foremost and most formative poets; Chaucer who consolidated in his

work a new spirit and language-stream, and Spenser, who wrought a pattern of grace and beauty into the harsh material of English heroic verse.

Professor A. J. A. Waldock's '*Paradise Lost*' *and Its Critics* (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d.) is the latest volume in the formidable ranks of critical examinations of the greatest English epic. For many successive generations critics accepted Milton's plan, to tell "Of Man's first disobedience," to "assert Eternal Providence," and to "justify the ways of God to men" as being just and unarguable. Addison made the theme of the poem synonymous with its moral, "that obedience to the will of God makes men happy, and that disobedience makes them miserable." He accepted that moral and he accepted the classical epic form in which it was stated by Milton. Intention and form were indistinguishably fused and Addison was more than content with the result. So it went on until the 19th century, when appreciators of the poetry became a little less satisfied about the poet's plan. Bagehot found the thoughts few, Keats found them elementary, whilst the late Walter Raleigh found in *Paradise Lost* a "gigantic filamented structure," the marvel of which was that it should stand at all, "seeing that it is spanned on frail arches over the abyss of the impossible, the unnatural, and the grotesque." Thought's background changes as the decades pass; the moral of one age is the scarcely-mentioned doubt of another. One 20th century critic decides that the epic is a symbolic story of temperance in which the apple is the crux; another is convinced that "what the poem is really about" is "the true state of Milton's mind when he wrote it," yet another (Mr. C. S. Lewis) puts the whole matter into the terms of breakfast-table theology and says, "The Fall is simply and solely Disobedience—doing what you have been told not to do: and it results from Pride—from being too big for your boots, forgetting your place, thinking that you are God." Professor Baldock takes Mr. Lewis and most of the latter-day critics and expositors of *Paradise Lost* through their conclusions and decides, if I understand him aright, that we shall go on reading it "for the glory of the writing and for the spirit of Milton that so lives in whatever he wrote" but that we must not attempt, as so many have done, "to inject sense into those parts of it that do not make sense." Planning is of the essence of all epic poetry, and certainly Milton planned hugely, but, as Mr. Baldock says, "For narrative the material of *Paradise Lost* was intractable. Milton did his best with it, but there were things that he tried to do with it that simply could not be done . . . this story is not in the full sense writable at all." Miltonians will go on arguing about it and about: it is the fate of greatness to be discussed.

No air of contention pervades Mr. Clifford Bax's latest attractive anthology, *The Poetry of the Brownings* (Frederick Muller, 10s. 6d.). He

has taken the injunction "whom God hath joined let no man put asunder" into the regions of book-making and has, so to speak, grouped the works of E.B.B. and Robert hand in hand in a ceremony of his own contriving. Robert Browning's fame has, of course, never suffered eclipse, but that cannot be said of his wife's. I read *Aurora Leigh* delightedly when I was young, but not for years have I found anyone able to confess to a like experience. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are better known and have set an example of controlled impulsiveness which women poets in love will do well to follow. Mr. Bax, most audaciously but successfully, has condensed the former poem, a full novel in blank verse, into less than a thousand lines, giving an air of continuity to the extracts by slipping in occasional bits of explanatory prose. Mr. Churchill did something like this to Dickens and others in a Sunday paper series sometime before the war, and with less excuse. It is good to be reminded that the frail Elizabeth could write, "in the depths of the Victorian crinoline period" as Mr. Bax notes:

> "I love love: truth's no cleaner thing than love.
> I comprehend a love so fiery hot
> It burns its natural veil of august shame,
> And stands sublimely in the nude, as chaste
> As Medicean Venus. But I know
> A love that burns through veils will burn through masks
> And shrivel up treachery. What, love and lie!
> Nay—go to the opera! your love's curable."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning gets fifty pages of quotation to Robert's one hundred. He is truncated too but is spared "continuity" treatment. Both poets are introduced by Mr. Bax in excellent brief biographies illuminated with flashes of critical insight. Of Robert, he says, "The root-idea in his weightier work is that every man, however strange, is an immortal being who, like a difficult poem or picture, may not come easily to perfection. His curiosity about such persons was inexhaustible. But . . .?" The "but" is concerned with his profound conventionality. "In real life (he) would almost certainly have shuddered away from most of the 'Men and Women' who are so elaborately examined in his poems."

The Centenary of the birth of Alice Meynell has been celebrated this year. Many of her poems endure in anthologies, and in texture and form the best of them place her fame securely with that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti. We are reminded of them by the publication of *Prose and Poetry by Alice Meynell,* Introduction by V. Sackville-West. (Cape, 15s.), and not only of the poems, which take up a bare thirty-four pages, but of her prose (which her devoted friend Meredith called her "princely journalism"). Women writers were giants in those days. Mrs. Meynell bore eight children and reared seven.

" 'You know what it is when I am mending frocks and everyone is calling me,' she writes to Coventry Patmore, 'these are all sweet duties but sometimes I am on the verge of crying.' " It is a very human picture and one that will appeal to many woman writers of our time, even to those with smaller families. She lived seventy-five years, was wife and mother, great friend and great hostess. She craved literary self-expression in a way that only those who have had a like craving from infancy can understand, but though her life was so full with womanly duties she never scamped a line. Prose and verse with Mrs. Meynell all had a lapidary finish; she aimed always for precision and stylistic perfection, often to the point of word-strain.

How fine and sensitive a critic she was! Consider this, of Swinburne:

> "What, finally, is his influence upon the language he has ransacked? A temporary laying-waste, undoubtedly. That is, the contemporary use of his vocabulary is spoilt, his beautiful words are wasted, spent, squandered, *gaspillés*. The contemporary use—I will not say the future use, for no critic should prophesy. But the past he has not been able to violate. He has had no power to rob of their freshness the sixteenth-century flower, the seventeenth-century fruit, or by his violence to shake from either a drop of their dews."

and this, of Tennyson:

> "We are apt to judge a poet too exclusively by his imagery. Tennyson is hardly a great master of imagery. He has more imagination than imagery. He sees the thing, with so luminous a mind's eye, that it is sufficient to him; he needs not to see it more beautifully by a similitude. 'A clear-walled city' is enough; 'meadows' are enough—indeed Tennyson reigns for ever over all meadows: 'the happy birds that change their sky'; 'Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night'; 'Twilight and evening bell' . . . these are enough, illustrious and needing not illustration."

Criticism such as this has a creative quality, and it abounds in Alice Meynell's prose. Of her poetry I will not say more in this review. It was discussed with a poet's full perception by Mr. G. Rostrevor Hamilton in the September-October issue. I will only say that this book of filial choice and collation is one that will be prized by many to whom Alice Meynell was a one-poem name.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: CXX

By ALICE HUNT BARTLETT

An Editor Looks At Poetry, by Stanton A. Coblentz. Published by The Wings Press

Stanton A. Coblentz as poet and editor with many books to his credit gives us in this volume the benefit of what he thinks we should know about the writing of poetry. This reviewer is happy that we possess so fine a balance-wheel as Mr. Coblentz in the poetry of to-day. He is opposed to the confusions that pass as poetry in the literature of our times. This is not a book to put into the hands of twelve-year-olds, which was the age when I tried to write, finding the wonderful little volume entitled "The Rhymster" by Thomas Hood. I found myself definitely on a safe path—the book is now out of print. Thomas Hood tells one what one may do and not what one may not.

There are so many phrases in Mr. Coblentz's book one wants to remember like the following: "The essence or spirit inaccessible to prose." And again "A related question concerns the emotional content of poetry. Of recent years some writers have swung so far on the side of so called *cerebral verse* that the poetry of emotion has tended to be neglected." How kindly is this comment! Further, "Imagination can be all things, the builder or wrecker of worlds, a twisted lens, a guttering candle, or an all-powerful searchlight."

Mr. Coblentz clearly contends that imagination, however unbridled it may seem, cannot actually be unbridled at all. It must follow its own laws and above all, must not offend against the proper relation of things. Above all this poet urges one BE YOURSELF.

The drawing of a picture in words is not poetry. The musical composition however soul-reaching is yet not poetry. These are both a part of poetry but not the whole of it. The right poet gives one the reader's direction in his perfect words. The signposts are there. Cheers for Mr. Coblentz!

In turning over the pages of "The Science of Poetry and The Philosophy of Language," by Hudson Maxim, which he presented to me when visiting him and his charming wife some time ago, I find much which I would like to quote. It is a formidable volume of 280 unusually long pages and published by Funk & Wagnalls Company. Mr. Maxim seeks in this volume to arrive at more practical and efficient means for the standardisation of poetry. He states "No other subject of equal interest and importance to mankind as poetry has been so neglected by science, so abandoned to the chaos of misunderstanding." Are not his comments most stimulating and timely?

Testimony of Time, by Helen Nivens. Published by The Wings Press

This is Miss Nivens' first book of poetry. This poet is a resident of San Francisco, Calif., and her poems have appeared in numerous publications on the West Coast. Let us see what she says as we journey into the book.

We pause at— REMEMBERING

What is remembering and the silent barque
Which creeps upon the lazy, sleeping will?
What are the images, not often still,
That flit and flutter—birds from out the ark
Of memory, vermillion plumed or dark?
Knowing a holiness hate cannot kill,
We keep a love the future must fulfil
And hold a lighted flame and fan its spark.

Is this remembering, O love of mine—
That other names are flotsam on the ocean
Which flows between your haven and my sea,
While yours is never scattered on the brine?
And I shall always long for your devotion
For our unfinished vision lives with me.

A quatrain follows : RESTLESSNESS

I fly from my own yesterdays,
I flee from myself but am not free.
My restlessness and my delays
Contend together to baffle me!

Miss Nivens writes the following: "The relation of time and eternity is often used by poets. I think Coleridge's exquisite lyric—'Time Real and Imaginary' is perhaps the most beautiful."

The Stairway of Surprise, by William Rose Benet. Published by Alfred A. Knope, New York

It is commented that it were idle to speak of "maturing" in the case of so accomplished a craftsman: here it is said is ripe fruit of a fine and moving talent. The book contains some 160 pages. This reviewer wishes for time to read it all. I am arrested in the early pages by a short poem—

DEUS

In the claraudience of dawn
  Thou are withdrawn;
In the enormous night sky,
  Too far, too high;
But in the anguished mind,
In the heart of despair,
  Strangely men find
    Thee there.

This statement would strike a sympathic chord in the thought of many a soldier in the last war.

The versatility of Mr. Benet is made manifest in this collection. We find a poem entitled—"Men On Strike" which causes me to wonder if Mr. Benet might not better have taken the road to Washington with his pack of talents and accomplished much for us all. Here are the first stanzas:

You say the President should not step in,
Sacrosanct Management not be touched at all . . .
If they refuse to bargain, won't play ball,
And just sit tight because they're sure to win,
Because they have the money and the power
And to the labor argument present
Merely their boot-soles, reading, with evident
Obliviousness, the comics, hour by hour—

If they say merely, "This is what we'll pay.
If you don't like it, strike!" (that's what they say
In substance) you grow purple and deplore
Not *their* contumacy, but Labor's nerve.
"They got the bargaining that they deserve!"
But is that all Labor is fighting for?

The real rock-bottom issue is as plain
As the plain people: a job at decent wage,
Without paternalism or patronage,
That meets the cost of living and can sustain
A family's self-respect; a decent place
To hang your hat; have children; under God
Make yourself more than a robot or a clod;
Be a real member of the human race.

There are seventeen more stanzas to this brilliant poem. In the intriguing form of poetry Mr. Benet has given here the stirring and the factual.

Thrilling is the romantic content in an early poem in this volume entitled "Token" of which here follows the last stanza.

Why do I love you?
Is it any wonder—
You who say forever,
On the way that I am drawn,
No, to the lightning;
Sorry, to the thunder;
Yes, to the dawn.

It is interesting that the distinguished Robert Hillyer reviewed this book for the "New York Sunday Times" Book Review.

Fifty-one Poems by Mary Webb. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

We learn that no one knew of the existence of these poems by Mary Webb until after her husband's death, they were found among his papers ready for publication. This is regarded as a great and happy find, typical and perfected, either for those who know her work or for those who here first encounter it.

There are times when perhaps, you also, reader have registered the thought on the following—

NIGHT IN THE OPEN AIR

Sleep fled from me—dear God, how could I sleep
With all Thy steadfast stars beholding me,
No shade between me and the dazzling deep,
Between my smallness and infinity?
Beneath our little sheltering roofs we creep
From this sharp terror of immensity,
This keen and restless joy; they guard and keep
Our weakness from the too much majesty.

How could we rest in earthly excellence,
Unsheltered from Thy shining purity?
Should we not quail before omnipotence,
And dissipate our souls in one long sigh
Of wonder? So Thou madest of pain and sin
A little homely thatch to roof us in.

Mr. Webb discloses her warm attachment for her husband in the short lyric—

THE BEACON

A robin's burning breast
Where restless shadows of the pine-tree lie,
Shines through the driving snow
When lost winds cry.

Your love, with rosy glow,
When winds of fate and evil shadows roam,
Promises joy and rest
And brings me home.

Life Is The Flesh, by Louise Townsend Nicholl. Published by E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc.

Miss Nicholl is credited with a mastery of phrase and fluent beauty of expression. The poem that gives the book its title is very arresting and plumbs unusual depths for a woman.

LIFE IS THE FLESH

When ether's swift accelerating cone
Unwound all reason in a lethal hour,
The fighting animal called life alone
Delivered me from evil's total power.
Life is the flesh and consciousness the thorn
Plucked out so easily by any sleep;
Unconscious by the body we are borne
From dissolution and the devil's keep.

This marriage of the marrow and the mind
Will end: intrepid body will conserve
And safe transmit the living core confined
Within its web of sinew and of nerve—
The breathing body absolute and whole
Whose life is also the immortal soul.

Here we have further evidence of Miss Nicholl's unusual ability—

MORNING IS ALL I WANT

I would die happiest in ardent light
With every petal of the life unfurled,
The sunlight drawing to its final height
My long intense alliance with the world.

Morning is all I want, the rapture lying
Abundant and immeasurably bright—
Reality so pure that even dying
Must wear the face of morning and of light.

MATER ANGLIÆ

By E. B. W. CHAPPELOW, F.R.A.S., F.R.S.A., M.R.S.L. British Authors Press. 2s. 6d.

Reviewed by Arthur Row

To write a guidebook in verse would be to invite the obvious usage of doggerel, but E. B.W. Chappelow, in his poem of Canterbury Cathedral, with its instructive survey of this time-hallowed edifice and the neighbourhood surrounding it, has shown us that art and accomplished verse, rising sometimes into poetry, can be present even in the minute and accurate dissections of historical and archaeological presentation. The author carries us almost bodily through Canterbury's most sacred sites and brings to our minds such mighty but forgotten names as Lanfranc, Anselm and Saint Augustine; and Becket's crown and mutilated shrine are revealed to us. Then he takes us to the bridge where "Dan" Chaucer rode and paused with his motley throng and we are shown the Church where Kit Marlowe was christened. Perhaps the most inspiring lines in the poem are those referring to the former circumstance:—

"When the blown bugles of the greening year
Thrilled all the high roads with their eagle call
To new delights and new companionship."

and later:—

"This Mother Church of all our glimpsed at hopes,
In all the bloom of her rare loveliness,
A mourning woman widowed and forlorn,
Brooding o'er vanished triumphs and dead days."

These and the concluding lines of the poem reveal the author to be a Catholic and a devotee; but there is little of controversy in this significant work in which all members of the Christian Faith could read with a personal and peculiar appreciation. The book contains four most beautiful illustrations by M. J. Gurney.

GUIDE TO CORRECT SPEECH

Reviewed by Roberta Shuttleworth, L.R.A.M. (Elec.), M.R.S.T.

Effective Speaking (Harrap & Co.) should attract a wide public Its value is not only to teacher and student for examination purposes but to all for whom the present increase in education implies an artistic and utilitarian urgency for a corresponding increase in the standard of speech. The author, J. G. Marash, M.A., L.R.A.M. (Eloc.), has the rare ability to conduct the student a long way in the minimum of time and combines scientific accuracy with artistic vision. The clear delineation of ideas is further made memorable by admirable spacing, careful paragraphic arrangement and all devices of numbering and lettering that keep the ideas distinct in the mind and aid visual memory. The work is tempered with humour, and drawings in the same spirit by Gwendoline Perkins enhance the clarity and memorable quality of the text.

In a treatise that covers barely seventy-six pages the treatment of some of the more advanced aspects of the subject is necessarily sketchy, notably the paragraphs on Gesture and Mime each of which subjects is a life study. The chapter on the Voice also suffers from an otherwise admirable brevity. A short space could have been given with advantage to explain the direction of the vocal flow from the sinuses to ensure the use of the full range of the voice.

In conclusion, I would say that as a brief guide to correct and interpretative speech I have seen no book I would recommend with such whole-hearted confidence.

CARAVANSERAI

By Robert Armstrong

In browsing my way through the little reviews and periodicals during these last few weeks, I have stumbled across a happy production—"Poetry Folio"—by the Kent and Sussex Poetry Society. It is pleasantly bound in a stiff paper cover, and can be obtained through the Society for 1s. "*I will make a poem one day,*" *said the boy,* "*and every man will shout when he hears it,*" is quoted on the cover, from James Stephens' *Crock of Gold*. The fifteen poems by members of the Society contained in this little book show a quality of poetic content to justify that aspiration. They are mainly in the broad stream of traditional and lyrical development, with a manipulation of line, metre, and imagery of a high order. On the other hand, a few of the poems have pungency and controlled freedom of construction showing that the selection has been penetrating. The Kent and Sussex Society, in setting this example, is to be congratulated.

Subject to a somewhat different classification is the second neostyled production of the Phoenix Society. This journal of twenty pages is a miscellany of poems, articles and essays of a diverse character. An analysis by Mrs. H. M. Wilson shows an unusually clear conception of the function of poetic image and symbol; that they penetrate beyond the range of either intellectual or emotional comprehension, yet, at their highest, by a mysterious alchemy of insight and logic of their own, illumine aspects of truth beyond conscious divination. Her conclusions are well-illustrated by the poems interspersed ; perhaps notably, one by David R. Allen.

"And we, who did not dance nor drink,
Struggled back to Sodom and Gommorah
Wondering why,
Like our fathers before us,
We had failed to gain man's heritage.
O! Christ the while had looked upon us.
But we
So busy with our introverted selves,
Saw nothing but our own two feet."

The Phoenix Society, if the difficulties are not too great, should follow the example of the Kent and Sussex Poetry Society and arrange for their journal to be printed in future. It has the promise of significance.

The third group production that has been kindly given to me is of an unusual, if not amazing character. Mrs. Persis Adam has for many years held open house for her poet friends on Saturday evenings. Fired by the response to propinquity of their respective muses, a subject has been selected at random on which inspiration could be unleashed for fifteen

minutes. With my foreknowledge of the hampering, if not trifling, results of similar competitive writing between Keats and Leigh Hunt and the vapid, if not laughable, efforts at compulsory evening sessions between Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry, I flicked the pages of a duplicated presentation of the fifteen-minute effusions, known as the Grey Book poems, with some diffidence.

I can only conclude that Mrs. Adam has gathered round herself a body of more than accomplished poets who respond to her own warmth and to the felicity of companionship in an incandescent fashion. The selection I have seen must of course have resulted from a happy coincidence of subject with mood and inspiration, when, as Keats has said, poetry should come as leaves to the trees. With polished technique which covers the sonnet form, satirical ballads, lyrics and free verse, with a full range of metrical and half rhyming adroitness, Mrs. Adams' Grey Book selection is a challenge and an achievement.

I was tempted to quote one of the poems to indicate the possibilities of a gathering of this kind when every Saturday seems a Whitsuntide, but selection would be invidious. Enough to say that a number of them have been published in our own *Review, Outposts, Punch, Country Life,* the *Scots Magazine,* and elsewhere.

Other group activities I have recently enjoyed include an entranced Sunday afternoon at Whistler's House with the Chelsea Poetry Circle, now affiliated to the Poetry Society. Margaret Rutherford recited poems by Walter de la Mare, and other poems, including Alice Meynell's "Renouncement," in a way that only a gifted verse speaker and great lover of poetry is able to do. The pastoral simplicity of many of the poems was heightened by the delicate nuance of her voice. Poetic diction is a subject only for the informed, but there flashed through my mind when listening to Miss Rutherford and the trained voices of other members of the Circle, who also contributed items, the words of Longfellow:

> "Then read from the treasured volume
> The poem of thy choice,
> And lend to the rhyme of the poet
> The beauty of thy voice."

I also spent an evening recently with the Hampstead Poetry Circle under the aegis of Mrs. Phyllis Macaulay at Belsize Square. A vital debate following a paper by Miss Taylor on the significance of Donne. It sent me away with "Death, be not proud," and the final adjunct, "Death; Thou shalt die" ringing in my mind. When an expert, who has distilled the essence of a poet's work, can enunciate it for an enthusiastic group and stimulate the exciting interchange I heard, then indeed the evening's enjoyment is complete.

Last winter I spent several equally exciting evenings at the Ethical Church Hall in Queensway, Bayswater, where Alec Craig and Ross Nicholls have done so much yeoman work for the presentation and appreciation of poetry. In addition to readings by established poets, a Forum has been created for the first hearing of poets of youth and promise. The cast of their poetic net is wide, and as I am blessed, or otherwise, with an eclectic taste, I have been pleased to learn that this season has begun with greater numbers and enthusiasm than before—though I should hardly have deemed that possible.

The newspapers and periodicals have recently yielded a fine harvest of poems for my winter granary, though I have been dismayed to notice that *The Sunday Times* has discontinued its practice of presenting a poem on its feature page. Although the selection was uneven in quality, the withdrawal of the poet's voice seems a policy without foresight. Is it too much to claim that the vision of the authentic poet, depending on his emotional and spiritual perception, has its own special contribution to make in our present difficulties? The voice of the poet in the past has been part of England's glory. It is more than ever needed now.

The Observer, while conceding a place to the poet, tucks him away in a two inch column near the obituaries and the advertisements. Can it be that the popular appeal is considered to have been destroyed by the supposed ineffectual pastoralism of the Georgians and the abstruse, jangling cacophonies of the extreme advanced schools? I think not, for the main stream of English poetry is thriving and healthy, ranging from traditional forms to pungent, experimental strivings, with idioms and images appropriate to an epoch of material disaster and change. This has been recognised by *The Evening Standard,* which should be congratulated for maintaining a panel of Modern Poets on its Saturday evening feature page for the past year. The Features Editor has shown a fine discrimination in his selection and has recognised a number of our own Society's poets during the course of the year.

The Listener continues its policy of two poems in each issue, but *John O' London* seems to be eschewing poetry to a great extent. A literary weekly which presents only an occasional poem and then insists on short-lined lyrics is like a man going fishing and forgetting his rod. Recently, however, Teresa Hooley contributed an effective poem, "Heterodoxy," which posed a question we must all have asked fervently during adolescence:

"In my Father's House are many mansions.
  Will there be room for all
His lesser children of field and forest,
  Kennel and byre and stall?"

One great poetic high spot among the weeklies has always been *Punch*. Not only has the technique of its humorous and satirical poems been a lodestar for all those who are interested in or who practice the medium, but there has been a sustained abundance of the pure poetic quality of its more pretentious or serious poems. It is a fallacy that light verse can be tossed off without due regard to the intricacies of prosody; if anything, the technique has to be even more immaculate for it to be effective. The completion of a stanza without a full stop in the enunciation, the use of enjambment to produce an anticipatory pause for the point to follow, modulation to express in whimsicality and the expert use of the amphibrach and the paean. The verse forms in *Punch* vary from the purely lyrical to the freest of free verse under the loose rein of theme restrictions. The rhyming has been catholic, often eccentric, and even the skilful use of half and consonantal rhyming has been exploited.

The pages of *Punch* have also been enhanced during the recent days of political complexity by serious contributions, often from Evoe, the editor himself, who is no inconsiderable poet. In a recent issue he inquired:

"Eyes rubbed too late for sleep,
Long time from toil a stranger,
Who shall bring Peace to keep
Her watch of danger?
Who shall give Peace a sword
For her defending,
That gains for sole reward
The fight unending?

Who, indeed? Unless it be the poets. And these same poets—how have they sharpened their swords? Through the medium of their own particular periodicals?

We are indeed well served by the little and larger reviews that cater for all aspirations of poetic achievement. I have before me the Autumn number of the *Verse Lover* (1s.) published by Spearmans. This extremely well-prepared small journal is a vehicle for the shorter poems of both poets of known quality and newcomers of merit, breaking into publication for the first time. I have not found in its pages a poem that was not a tribute to the selective capacity of the editor. There is a nice balance between the traditional and a competent exploration of developed forms. A vein of lyricism which is singularly attractive jostles the sterner poems. Though, as is only to be expected, a full certainty of mature experience, both personally and poetically, is absent from many of the poems, there is abounding promise. The value of *Verse Lover* is enhanced by its reviews of poetry written on the Continent during the Occupation. The reviewer is H. E. M. Stone. Inspirational to a degree, but with a poignancy of its own, it serves as a splendid introduction to the work, among others, of Paul Elouard, one of the significant voices of France.

"We shall forget these indifferent foes
Soon a crowd
Will repeat the clear flame in a very soft voice
The flame for us two for us alone patience.
For us two anywhere the kiss of the living.

A long appreciation of Edith Sitwell is contributed by Wilfred Bartlett, whose own control of beauty of line and epithet makes him a singularly appropriate reviewer of a poet so brilliantly ornate, albeit so diffuse despite her evocative power. I notice that *Verse Lover* is facing a circulation crisis. I am truly surprised.

Wilfred Bartlett again figures, but this time as a contributor, in the pages of *The Verist* (1s.), a poetry magazine recently launched in the West Country. The current issue contains a representative selection of poems by names already familiar to readers of our own columns, such as Walford Morgan, Gladys Keighley, John Graddon and Aneurin Rhys. The idiom of *The Verist*, taken as a whole, is less traditional and shows a great concern for the stress of the time. The poems are practically without exception carried on the tide of their differing themes to a consistent overall image. There is a work of significance here. The striving may articulate itself and become a voice in the chaos with which it has wrestled with poetic perception.

This also true of the issue of *Prospect* which I have on my desk, for this ninepenny journal with its book reviews carries the imprint of youth. Although I can trace the underpulse of traditional prosodic skill, freer forms are embraced. There is an astringency of epithet, a personal symbolism and a truncation or extension of line to meet the necessities of a theme. The same striving, the conflicts and reconciliations are there, presented with less of the shock methods, so long typical of the symbolist groups. Here, young poets have been represented who in time may have much to yield. James Kirkup is a young poet of singular gifts of imagery who, with lessening introspection, is developing rapidly.

"Give love, that night
may have a place for all
and that the dying may have sight
of grace in time's reversal."

Hardiman Scott has a fine poem with fully exploited half rhyming, and S. I. Lott, in an exuberant finale, sets the keynote to this forum for youth.

"For I must find that path,
Must crunch its powdery white,
Must mouth the cold and scour the eyes,
Must touch the bright and feel the blood,
For I am young at twenty-five
And all the world's agog."

In a compact and pleasantly presented magazine, *The Jongleur* (1s.), presents an antithesis to *Prospect* which indicates the wide nature of this mysterious art. The stanza forms are, with two or three exceptions, uniform and traditional, and the rhymes are full. It is only occasionally, however, that a poem displays that bane of initiates, the profusion of obvious or luscious adjectives. There is a singing quality in many of the poems and spiritual tranquillity that contracts outside our times' disorder with a conception of the eternal, although Lady Margaret Sackville has sudden clamour in the conclusion of "The Body Lies in Comfortable Sleep."

"The Body sleeps. The stern and dreadful pain
Continues whilst the spirit captive lies—
O bitter passion of a world self-slain,
When shall the Judgement thunder from the skies?"

And John Redwood Anderson has a tender love lyric with its concluding nostalgia:

"Flower-token of a vanished time,
Shut in life's closing book,
To mark a page of olden rhyme
On which I dare not look."

Outposts (1s.), edited by Howard Sergeant, is a sturdily-bound journal with an attractive display cover, containing true critical standards, irrespective of form or technique. One is enabled to keep abreast of poetry developments by a series of well-written cameo reviews of new books. Here, also, we find a brilliant selection of mature and accomplished poems covering a wider range of form and content. James Kirkup once again appears, as does Hardiman Scott; Arnold Vincent Bowen, in a poem, "Sea-Wind," displays all his evocative power by his exploitation of assonance, alliteration, and instinctive selection of the sensuous epithet.

"How the sun chiselled you there a sonnet of ivory,
Lapped the salt, left the scent, and your sweet-spare shimmering
form.
The wavelets leaped, and shook all their firetipt javelins
Under the hard blue heaven, and under your eyelids
You saw the amber pavilions sliding, dissolving
In convolute colours the very cave of Merlin.

The Gate (2s. quarterly) is an international review of literature and interests the poet and poetry-lover by reasons of translations by V. Sackville West of Rainer Maria Rilke of extraordinary poetic virtuosity. The great symbolist capacity of Rilke in "The Eighth Elegy," the extreme imaginative projection into the hereafter, is caught with a minimum of loss in the translation.

Cecil Day Lewis repeats, yet extends, in an article—"The Pattern of Images"—the dissection of the function and pre-eminence of imagery in poetry which was the theme of his greatest critical work so far—*The Poetic Image*. Here he reminds the poet that the consistency of the impression created by a poem is implicit in the selection and ordering of his images about key images welling up from the experience which the poem embodies.

The reviews in *The Gate* of the "Death of Virgil," by Hermann Broch, and of "Rodin", by Rainer Maria Rilke, are equally penetrating and brilliant. *The Gate* is most definitely a quarterly for the seeker and the discerning which I cannot leave without quoting shortly from the "Prayer for the Wanderer" by Wrey Gardiner:

> ". . . In the poverty of our poems let us kneel
> Before the broken stones, hearing somewhere the sweep
> Of a dark curtain blotting out the glory,
> The perfect making of a work of art, the still,
> Silent solitude of beauty haunting
> With light feet the eyes of the lost wanderer
> Over the harp of the years."

The mention of Wrey Gardiner reminds us that he is the editor of the *Poetry Quarterly* (1s. 6d.) which has maintained its publication and its integrity as a vehicle for poetry of an advanced or experimental character through nine volumes in war and peace. It has given space to surrealists, neo-romantics, apocalyptics and, more recently, existentialists. However the pure traditionalist may have been scarrified by the apparent iconoclasm of these advanced groups, there was a form and content that could be traced back to the broad stream of English poetic development, despite the threads of connection being often extremely attenuated. Except in so far as there has not been mere posing, pretentiousness, or mere deliberate stridency for effect, the rebellion of these groups against vapidity or unhealthy Georgian nostalgia has been salutary. They were tuning their ears to the distress and disorder of the epoch, and in the due passage of time a *via media* may emerge from which new significant voices may arise with all the glory of their poetic heritage and the new vivid awareness that the advance-guard has discovered.

In the present issue there is, among other informative reviews, a long analytical study of David Gascoigne, a poet perhaps more sensitive to the torment of these times, their bewilderment and anxiety, than any other. He has very little recent output, but in due time may distil his despair into a positive poetic or mystical alleviation.

Sean Jannett, in addition to erudite defences of the advanced groups, has, in past issues, pleaded the extension of technique into Gaelic and Celtic byeways of assonance, consonantal rhyming and alliteration, and into the felicities of half rhyming.

There are many competent examples in the *Quarterly*, but I will content myself with a quotation from Kenneth Patchen's "The Stars Go To Sleep So Peacefully," showing how the fires of faith arise from the embers of despair.

"O the soul of the world is dead . . .
Truth rots in a bloody ditch;
And love is impaled on a million bayonets.
. . . . . .
There is a man wading in the river . . .
A woman baking little cakes . . .
There is a village we will come to—
O there are arms for us!
A tree of remembering stars—
There is This Unkneeling Flame——"

The Duinese Elegies of Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Ruth Spiers. are also a feature of *Poetry London* (3s. 6d.), which has resumed bi-monthly publication after only sporadic appearances during the war years. It is a handsome, stiff paper-bound production, with illustrations to a well-known poem of Dylan Thomas's in a symbolic, visceral fashion by Ceri Richards. The cover design is by Henry Moore. I believe that the nature of the lithographs has evoked a considerable interest among students of art.

John Heath Stubbs, Margaret Diggle and Anne Ridler carry out a remarkable appreciation of the mystical poet, Charles Williams, who died in 1945. As one who regarded and mourned him as a major metaphysical poet.

"diagrams of light moving in the light"
"the impassioned diagram of space"

I was reminded of a vein of pure lyricism:

"as I took the blindfold track,
the road that runs from tales,
through the darkness where Circe's son
sings to the truants of towns
in a forest of nightingales."

Nicholas Moore enters a plea in his review of a group of essays on criticism, "The Intent of the Critic," for a greater degree of erudition and competence in the critic, and deplores the poet as a critic of the work of poets.

Mr. Tambimuttu, in his editorial, which contains a long appreciation of Dylan Thomas, advocates the employment of poets as critics. We will wait in trepidation for this controversy to be reconciled before opening our commonplace books again. Mr. Tambimuttu has, however, I feel,

little to lose in the debate, as *Poetry London* also includes three fine critical expositions by poets whose poems are also in the journal—G. S. Fraser on Auden, Hugh Gordon Porteous on the "Four Quartets," and Kathleen Raine on Herbert Read.

Among the twenty-five poems is an excerpt from "A Canticle of the Rose" by Edith Sitwell, displaying the wealth of imagery and subtleties of metrical and line-length technique that has been her especial distinction.

> "So, Lady, you and I
> And the other wrecks of the heart, left by the lion
> Of Love, shall know all transmutations, each degree!"

There are representative poems also by Keith Douglas, Pierre Jean Jouve, Anne Ridler, and Stephen Coates among others—although I notice a complete absence of the sonnet form which has such a unique place in English poetic history.

This is a journal for the connoisseur of poetry, for without exception there is a poetic compulsion in all the poems and a full range of technique within the stream of modern poetic development, with a freshness of idiom and image and the virtue of the quiet, final under-emphasis. Even the purely lyrical is not absent, and there is a courage in some of the poems that augurs well, as in Patrick Evans's "Christmas, Great Britain, 1941":

> "Yet have no fear; the raven's flight,
> The curve the times are describing, leads to the light
> Through broken circles of darkness. And those who trust and love
> Shall find in full what now is far removed."

EMPTINESS

Warm as the sap of the leaf is, soft as a tall grass sheath is, cold in the spleen of grief is
the thought that should not have died:
useless as overripe corn is, bare as a finished bone is, desolate-mouthed as a horn is
the cry you should not have cried:
dark as the forest of life is, dark as the heart where the knife is, dark as a sinuous wife is
the way of escape we tried:
now still the expectant groom is, peaceful the painted room is and pacing through the gloom is
loveliness, empty-eyed . . .

RONALD WESTBROOK.

METAMORPHOSIS

This is no setting for romance—the crowd
Queueing for service, the tobacco haze,
The reek of steaming cabbages, the loud
Clatter of crockery and metal trays.
She is no heroine who wheels that trolley
Of dirty plates piled to precarious heights,
Who day-dreams in abstracted melancholy
And lifts a hand to put her hair to rights.
No heroine—yet her gesture to my fancy
Evokes the type, the classic parallel,
Suggesting by some subtle necromancy
A seaborne goddess riding on a shell;
Divorced from time and place and menial dress
She's Paphian Aphrodite and no less.

ERIC FRYER.

RAINBOW FROM 'BUS

As two apart and solitary points,
Upon the landscape, suddenly are brought
In close relation, when the sun has wrought
His lively miracle—whose fire annoints
The loosened tresses of the weeping rain
With painted light, bending the rainbow's bridge
Across the valley, linking field with ridge
And laving each in a like, heavenly stain.

So may the prism of the polished Word
To gentle Thought afford a free expression—
As light in raindrops; isolated mind
To mind be linked, their intimate accord
Articulate in sweet, harmonious fusion,
What songs may such association find?

H. M. GREET.

THE LOVE BETWEEN

O love is love, or high or low
And I that love must woo thee variously.
At base, the intemperate and thrusting flow
Demands thee to be conjugate,
To yield, that in thy flesh my soul may know
Itself, and see the shadow-light of thee.
And in the height, when all desire is sped,
All errant purposes consumed in one,
When severance itself is dead
Then even love shall find oblivion
And the last word of love be said.

Yet there is love that lies between.
Nor primal urge nor vision ultimate
Is here, but human love, unclean or clean,
The sad and splendid pageantry of love.
Here's love of heart, the love companionate,
Love that surrenders all, love passionate,
Love that below the heavens above
Is earthly still, and yet has learned to rise
Beyond our carnal ecstasies.

Here sounds aloud the name of friend,
An oriflamme to light the path of pain.
For love is barren, damnable and vain
That shall not when the sun is high
Be swift into the shade if so to end
Some fellow pilgrim's agony.

O love is glorious, of woman-man,
Of mother-father and the child begot,
Of friends—and the immortal span
Of light and darkness knows no lovelier name.
And thus I love thee, and desire thee, not
As the partial light of some tremendous flame
Nor yet with fleshly utterance, but warm
With the love of firelight and of home.

And when
With splendid urgency my love shall form
A worded music I shall sing
Of women lovely, human as their men
Who love and hate, and love, remembering.
For we are gods with lightless feet of clay
Who cry within the darkness, turn and cling
And move love-handed to a nobler day
When love of heart shall light the homeward way.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

POEM

What shall I weigh against this weight of gold
What shall I balance in my little book
Against this fabulous sunlit entry?
Shall I set down a voyage to the old
Swart, mysterious tombs of the Nile,
Or a long summer in the lap of Greece?
Shall I remember how the mountains look
When at the last the sandy waste is crossed
And the first foothills quietly lean
Their gentler heads against those snowy breasts?
And if not these, can any sweets suffice
For counterpoise against this sweet I have,
To lie in quietness on a grassy bank
My hand in yours, my lips against your cheek,
To watch the tinted minutes drifting by
To feel the pulse of the world beat in your heart
To hear the Song of Songs cadence your sigh?

Oh child, oh sweet, I know that on the edge
Of this still meadow tramps the noisy world
Know, too, that we belong to it, must pledge
This in its pawnshop for the price of bread
But I will not forget (forget not you!)
Where's hid the treasure, which is the dead—
The jewel or the ticket, which the truth
The true true words of parting, true, too true
Or the tremor of your cheek against my mouth.

BRYAN ANSTEY.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Madam,

May I bring forward for discussion a matter which seems to me to be of the utmost importance to English poetry at the present time?

It is the question of Commonwealth poetry and the great part which it must inevitably play in the future of English work generally.

Now whilst it is not yet widely known in this country, it will be readily understood that the member nations of the Commonwealth have developed their individual poetic cultures no less—and in some cases far more—than the other aspects of their National life. Indeed the poets of Australia, to mention one country only, have produced and are producing work of a quality equal to that of our own leading contemporaries. And whilst their work is individual, fresh, and virile in its approach, it is none the less essentially rooted in the heartsoil of British institutions with their common way of life, and in a culture which is our own also.

In the past, the geographical problem has raised a barrier through which a lively exchange of ideas and current work could not pass, but this is no longer so to the same extent. The assembling of current work from every part of the Commonwealth at regular and frequent intervals has, for the first time, become a practical possibility.

This situation is *unique* in the history of English poetry.

Although I am, with all means at my disposal, assisting this development by the foundation of *Poetry Commonwealth* (a small quarterly of current Commonwealth work) it is not possible for a single journal to provide more than a minor fraction of the required "platform". For this reason, I appeal most earnestly to the Poetry Society, and to all who can assist, to play their part in bringing overseas Commonwealth work into the mainstream of our own poetic culture.

Many of the leading poetry editors and poets in Canada, South Africa, and Australia, etc., have expressed to me, personally, their warmest approval of the idea proposed, and the wholehearted support which they have given or pledged leaves no doubt as to the depth of their conviction.

The sectarian issues which continue to divide poets and their readers in Great Britain have equally violent counterparts elsewhere, and it would perhaps be pertinent to say that *Poetry Commonwealth* will draw upon the best work, wherever it may be found and of whatever technique, regardless of "labels".

Once poetry lovers in this country have discovered for themselves the richness and variety of British work from oversea, with its new and revitalizing approach, it will, I am sure, enjoy an ever widening readership.

In the meantime, I should like to invite all who are interested (whether or not they wish to contribute to the *Great Britain* section of P.C.) to write to me for further details.

21 Gilkes Crescent,
Dulwich Village, London, S.E.21.

I am, etc.,
LIONEL MONTEITH.

Madam,

While welcoming *Shakespearian Emendations* as an encouragement to the scholarly approach and the study of texts, I venture to break a lance with the learned author of No. 5 regarding Jaques in Act II of *As You Like It.*

I could not agree more with the changes of "must" to "much", "friend" to "friends", and even "doe" to "should" (not textually probable) in the First Scene; but it seems to me that Mr. Parsons involves himself in the vice of commentators, namely false readings leading to a mass of inconsistencies, in the Seventh.

He objects to the Duke tilting at Jaques in lines which he describes as "infamously slanderous" suggesting "what Jaques would do" if he had his will of donning motley and "cleansing the body of the infected world if they will patiently receive his medicine," namely

> "Most mischievous foule sin, in chiding sin:
> For thou they selfe hast bene a Libertine,
> As sensuall as the brutish sting it selfe,
> And all th'imbossed sores, and headed evils,
> That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
> Would'st thou disgorge into the generall world."

These lines are certainly typical of Shakespeare's wit, not at its best but pungent. Even the Warwick Shakespeare, to which Mr. Parsons is otherwise so indebted, describes "this glimpse into Jaques' past" as "in Shakespeare's 'epic' manner." We must remember that since the appearance in 1578 of Lyly's now rather-tedious-seeming dialogues which pinned the name "euphuistic" on ponderous debate, it had become the fashion at the Globe Theatre (where the all-potent "groundlings" could exact compliance, with their dead cats and bad eggs) to pad the dramatic action with pseudo-philosophic disquisition, interlarded with "A jig or a tale of bawdry" (such as we find when Hamlet has his head "in fair Ophelia's lap", or even when he rants upon her coffin). Theatre then contained the evening news, the political pamphlets and histories, and the latest dirty stories. The pun (the word-of-power in two or three senses) was paramount and the level of humour or of logical sequence in the dialogue was poorer still.

The real difficulty (I suggest) is not to deny the excellent Folio reading of the Duke's speech because Jaques' answer seems off the point. First let us consider if Jaques' reply is unusually much off the point at all. The introduction of the bawdy theme, typical of the times, was started by Jaques and is part and parcel of the whole conception of the jester's function as set forth throughout this Act—the jester is to give new and old bawdy jokes mixed with dialectic moralizings and "Memento Mori" warnings (as in the Hamlet passage above-cited).

Two principles of coherence are worthy of note in this passage, first the series of puns on clothing, "motley" thrice, the "cost" of princes, etc. twice, and the questions as to whether the clothes (suits) *suit* ("Thou shalt

have . . . motley," "It is my only suit" and "but therein *suits* his folly to the mettle of my speech . . .") the second is the scabrous theme already mentioned. The Duke says "evils . . . thou wouldst discharge into the *generall* world". Jaques (as he stands) can perfectly well be taken in period as cracking a pun as he answers dialectically the "general" proportion, by saying "who cries out on pride (of flesh—'proud flesh' "—as also of rich clothes, the second theme of the passage) "that can therein tax any . . . private party!", an obviously poor joke.

But apart from this, what is the first thing we notice about Jaques' reply to the Duke (apart from the fact that Folio 2 had, of pride in *dress* "till that the weary very means do ebb", obvious nonsense and well corrected by Singer to "wearer's")? The obvious thing is, surely, the gap, the mutilated line, the "cut" in Jaques. "Why, who cries out on pride", is two feet (four syllables) short, unreasonably. We could botch in "O good my Lord" before it, but it is far likelier that two or three lines were cut with the four feet, and *this* solves Mr. Parsons' problem (but no prizes offered for lines of suitable padding!).

Even without this, surely the meaning is clear? The duke says "the *infected* world? You'd infect the world, you old libertine" (including the "satire" interpretation of their remarks) and Jaques replies "But no-one makes cracks on proud-flesh generally if he can cite the particular Private Parties! Nor on luxurious dress if what he really means is *x* or *y*?—if I say City Aldermen's wives wear fortunes on their shoulders, I don't mean a particular one—*unless* she foolishly takes the blame by contesting it. Same with the beadle who says his gold braid is paid for by the Parish . . . A Jester jests impartially and genially: but of course, whom the cap fits"! Poor logic but fair comedy.

I am, etc.,

A. V. Burbury.

Madam,

If the views of a mere tyro in poetry can be worth anything at all I should like to say that in my opinion nothing better than J. T. Brockway's "Let the Poets Sing" has appeared in Poetry Review for a long time. First because it is a brilliant diagnosis of the prevalent poetic malaise (I mean "free verse" when it has bartered its freedom for clever-seeming obscurity). Again because it floodlights the nature of true poetry. And not least because it sounds a clarion call for the pulling up of poetic socks.

But I have confessed to being a novice and that must be my excuse for some bewilderment on following the reading of this article by Arthur Row's letter, with its reference back to the Premium Editor's comments on poetic contractions in the March-April issue.

Neither the Premium Editor nor Mr. Row seems to like what the latter calls "the unfortunate 'He's' and 'I'lls' of the less gifted competition entrants." But whereas the Premium Editor lumps the "e'ers," "ofts" and "e'ens" in the same condemnation, Mr. Row thinks that these confer an "obvious embellishment." Yes, but (I stand to be enfiladed from both lines of fire) isn't it a question of "period"? Keats can write—

"... the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways"

and get away with it; one reads that line without any jolt of incongruity. But graft "o'er-darken'd" on one of the moderns, and it rings at once the self-conscious note of the pseudo-antique.

I cheerfully admit that the fault may well lie with me, but Mr. Row's "unfortunate 'He's' and 'I'lls' " of the Premium Editor's "less gifted competitors" do not (*pace* both these experts) ring discordantly for me in modern work, remembering Rupert Brooke's

"And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names"

and other instances.

Yet (and let me emphasize that I am not trying to catch anyone out) the condemned "He'll" and other contractions of the same order do come in—"period" or not—even among the Olympians. Witness Keats with—

"... as I've read love's missal through to-day
He'll let me sleep ..."

or Milton:

"But come, let's on!
'Twixt Africa and Ind I'll find him out."

So that, expanding Mr. Brockway's battle-cry, I would say "Let the poets sing—in their own idiom!" But immediately I want to qualify that, being unable to help feeling an instinctive readiness to accept some contractions without flickering an eyelid and equally unable to avoid shying at others. For example, "I'll" sounds well enough in any context, "o'er-darken'd" suits its own period but no other, and certain other contractions don't fit anywhere—of these last, "don't" itself and "it's" for "it is" are instances.

There's the impasse; will the Premium Editor or Mr. Brockway or Mr. Row elucidate please?

May I end with congratulations on the newly-designed P.R., of which the frontal index for one thing strikes me as a conspicuous improvement? And if, greatly daring, I add that, to me, "Poets and Pretenders" seems a shade too rigidly traditional in the standards by which it judges new writers I may perhaps redeem temerity by hailing P.R.'s ready-cut pages and the relegation of advertisements to the back.

I am, etc.,

MICHAEL REDGROVE.

(In an Address to the Poetry Society, a modern poet deplored the preoccupation of the Georgian poets with subjects such as a linnet on a bough.)

To the Editor of the POETRY REVIEW

Madam,

I'm only a linnet who sits on a bough
But it seems to me merely pedantic
To say that a tortoise, a tank, or a cow,
Or a sewing machine is a theme to endow
With embroidery (rhymeless and senseless enow
To set any bird yawning), yet not to allow
That a girl on a bough is romantic.

For *thousands* of years my progenitors sat
As the model and muse of the poet,
And deaf to the prowling approach of the cat
Or the voice of our little ones gnawed by a rat
We posed, and what's more—(keep this under your hat)
We went without lunch so we shouldn't get fat,
And we never let *anyone* know it.

And whether your poet produces his verse
Upon lavatory paper or vellum,
And writes with the passionate joy of a hearse,
Or a nonagenarian needing a nurse,
Let him please to remember before he gets terse
With a girl on a bough that the man with the purse
Will buy, when he can, what is better—not worse,
And the poets of old *they did sell 'em.*

So there!

Yours, all hot and ruffled,

A. LINNET, per T.C.H.

Madam,

If, as editor and critic, I was very interested to read Mr. Marvin Magalaner's remarks (Sept.-Oct. issue) following Mr. David Russell's letter on the danger of uncritical acceptance of modern poetry, I was delighted—as a member of the Poetry Society—to see the Editor's footnote:

"Has not the term 'modern' as applied to poetry changed in meaning? Writing of the true moderns Mr. Russell observed in his letter: 'The younger poets . . . are moving into the post-war period with a clearer understanding of the true function of poetry'."

That brief paragraph has greater significance than would at first glance seem apparent. I hope that I am correct in interpreting it as an editorial

awareness of the recent developments in contemporary poetry, an awareness which, in my opinion, is essential if the Poetry Society is to fulfil its highest purpose.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that the war years 1939-45 should produce an extraordinary interest in all the arts, and particularly in music and poetry. With the sacrifice of personal freedom, and in the presence of suffering and death on a scale unknown before, men and women were driven back upon their private emotions and it was natural that they should seek an outlet—an escape, in some cases—in something of a more permanent and spiritual nature. They found it in poetry and many of them experienced a sincere urge to make themselves articulate through this medium. The results were often both crude and immature. It could not have been otherwise. War stimulates emotion, but emotion does not of itself create good poetry.

Yet some good poetry was written during that period. Despite the conditions under which they were compelled to write, a number of poets did succeed in producing work which, if not of major importance, was certainly of a high standard. Amongst them one can mention such individualistic poets as Alex Comfort, Norman Nicholson, Morwenna Donnelly, George Woodcock, Patric Dickinson, Kathleen Raine, Anne Ridler, John Heath-Stubbs, Henry Treece, and Vernon Watkins, whose work has been published in collected form. One could also name another score of promising young poets not so widely known.

The importance of these young poets, however, lies not so much in their past achievements as in their future potentialities. With their experience of war well assimilated, their integrity unimpaired, they stand at the beginning of a new era. The sterile intellectualism of the thirties has been rejected in their search for a philosophy and a way of life more in keeping with the needs of humanity. It is, in fact, a Neo-Romantic revival and has its counterparts in America and the Commonwealth countries. I am not so unwise as to make rash prophecies, but it is fairly safe to assume that some of these young poets, given the necessary freedom to develop their own individual forms of expression and the right to receive intelligent and unprejudiced criticism, will create poetry worthy of the great traditions of English literature.

That brings me to the point of my letter—what is the Poetry Society doing to encourage such poets? In contrast to Mr. David Russell, I would suggest that the real danger today is not an uncritical *acceptance* but an uncritical *rejection* of modern poetry (it should be noted that whilst Mr. Russell speaks of experimental poetry, Mr. Magalaner identifies it with modern poetry). How often do we have the opportunity of seeing any experimental work, accepted critically or not, in *Poetry Review?* Does the *Review* doubt its own ability to judge any contemporary work other than that which follows strictly traditional lines?

I maintain that true critical standards can be applied to all poetry,

whatever the form or technique of the poet concerned, and that the Poetry Society, as the one organisation of its kind in this country, has a definite responsibility to lead the way in establishing those standards by which the work of all poets, whether 'traditionalist' or 'modern', can be properly assessed. In this way it can succeed in eliminating the confusion and absurdity of the modernism v. traditionalism controversy. (It is my opinion that a great amount of nonsense has been accepted under the label 'modern' merely because the Poetry Society has failed to recognise its responsibility in the past.) Only in this way can it become a truly representative body for all poets.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I wish to emphasise that I am not advocating modernism against traditionalism—my own work should be sufficient evidence of that—but I am deeply concerned that the Poetry Society should not restrict its immense possibilities by the exposition of narrow partisan views. I am, etc., HOWARD SERGEANT.

Madam, *John Donne and the Spiritual Life.*

I take leave to doubt whether Donne was an ideal exponent of matters spiritual so far as his poetry is concerned; he cannot be regarded as a propounder of fresh "mystical truth," nor can it be contended that he saw into the "mystery of things, face to face," more clearly than the theologians preceding him.

He was in fact throughly conversant with the theology of both the old and new church.

Mr. Wagner in the course of his essay refers to over a dozen writers, ranging from Milton to Nietsche, which certainly widens the scope of his discourse, but I do not know that the allusions contribute much to enlightenment on Donne's spiritual views.

Mr. Wagner in speaking of Donne's insight into the mysteries of spiritual life says "Donne was concerned with the body; he saw the debt owed by man to the body. He wanted to understand why we wear this cumbrous frame of flesh."

As a learned Doctor of Theology he would of course be aware that both Body and Soul were subject to the vicissitudes of a "fallen state."—

> "But oh alas so long so farre
> Our bodies why doe wee forbeare?
> They are ours though they are not wee, wee are
> The intelligences, they the spheare."

Here we have one of Donne's paradoxes; the body is one thing, *we* are another ("They are ours though they are not wee").

This false idea, admissible only as a poetical conceit, is of no value as an outlook on spiritual life.

From the point of view of reason there is justification for maintaining belief in a future existence; Donne's expression of this belief raises some curious questions.

To what extent and how the soul is provided with means to express itself during the period of separation from the body we do not know, but this brings us inevitably to the question of resurrection regarding which Mr. Wagner gives us an interesting quotation.

"If all things be in all
As I thinke, since all, which were, are and shall
Bee, be made of the same elements"—(Satyre)

that is one quotation, to which he joins:

"Shall recollect and in one all unite" (letter)

and to these two he joins a third:

"He would have justly thought this body a soul,
If not of any man yet of the whole" (Resurrection)

and from this composite arrangement of his own he derives the following.

"There is a common soul of mankind towards which all souls strive to go and man is in relation to that soul, as he is to himself."

It is impossible to judge of quotations like this, taken from their context and used in this way: and what does Mr. Wagner mean when he says—"man is in relation to that soul, as he is to himself?"

A man cannot be in relation to himself.

And this "common soul" he speaks of: either he belongs to that, is merged into that and thus loses his identity, which is Shelley's doctrine over again, or he retains his own individuality and cannot have part in a common soul.

If it can be reasonably argued that Donne asserts men eventually all unite in one soul (and thus as separate personalities suffer extinction) one must conclude that Dr. Donne, so far as his poetry is concerned, is not an entirely reliable guide in matters spiritual.

"Donne was a little afraid of the immensity of what he had discovered," says Mr. Wagner; if the above represents his "discovery," he appears to have had some reason for feeling disturbed.

Mr. Wagner in the course of his essay says this:

"It is all very well, one might say, to assert all these things, to trace the progress of Donne's doctrine of the soul, but it hasn't shown anything."

Finally he tells us:

"Men's hunger for a spiritual state is probably most fully satisfied on this earth, by love, since only in love does one reach unity."

There is no such thing as a "fusion of two souls," if by that is meant that the two melt into one; nothing is more apparent than that the identity of any personality is a thing apart, however closely allied by mutual feeling.

For myself I think Donne had his own interesting methods of imparting his views on any subject that appealed to him, but that one may look to his poetry as an unquestionable source of enlightenment in spiritual matters, is not so evident.

I am, etc., RAYMUND BOURNE.

THE 1947 SHIRLEY CARTER LEIGH GREENWOOD POEM COMPETITION: REPORT AND AWARD

By William Kean Seymour

Several hundred poems were submitted for the Greenwood Competition —and 1947 may justly be claimed a vintage year, with the vines various and numerous and many grapes blushed with strength and beauty.

To choose from so much that is robust, compelling or lovely in thought and execution was a difficult and exacting task, but ultimately, after some days of close scrutiny and appraisement, I reduced the area of selection to thirty-five entrics; and then, it seemed, my task began all over again until criticism was finally crystallised in decision.

The winning poem is *The Lovely and the Dead,* a sequence of fourteen sonnets by John Waller. They express the passion and affliction of war-scarred youth, but with a strange gentleness and maturity seldom found in the literature of protest. The poet is manifestly governed by an impulse towards great language; he is no bare-boned modern in this; yet fresh winds of contemporary thought and imagery blow through his verse, so that he stands as it were symbolically between the Olympians with their cultivation of the sounding phrase and our present-day poets with their more austere and economical methods. Readers will notice that Mr. Waller's sonnets are neither Petrarchan nor Shakespearean, but compounded (I must think) of impatience with these traditional models. Both forms are flexible enough within their rigid rules, but Mr. Waller elects deliberately to transgress, although obviously not because he is unable to observe them. And the rhymes themselves are often half-rhymes, or linked with assonance and depending on the clinch and chime of consonants. It is indeed this intentional technical departure from the traditional sonnet forms with their classic rhyme schemes and purity of rhyme that proclaims the poet's contemporary leanings. It does not jar upon me; the deliberate disorder even charms me, and I would ask our more strictly conformist readers to weigh and consider these innovations with care. By and large I have no doubt at all that *The Lovely and the Dead* is the most distinguished entry in the Competition.

My choice for Second Place is *The Well,* an irregular rhymed poem of thirty-six lines by Thomas Russell, which has for me—as I think it will have for our readers—the appeal of something magical and inexpressibly haunting. In its economy of words, in its evocation of cool shadowed beauty encompassing chill horror, in its pictorial precision and reticent statement of swift tragedy it appears to me to be a perfect short poem and one which will find its way into the anthologies.

For the Third Place I choose *Archeus and Mortality,* by Joan Quayle, for its indwelling philosophy, its colourful imagery and the sure quality of its free unrhymed verse.

Fourth I put *Andromache,* a dramatic poem by Lieut. R. L. Cook, R.N., written in flexible blank verse which sometimes moves compulsively into rhyme. A poignant poem this, with the tragic queen beautifully characterised in speech and soliloquy.

Fifth place is taken by an eclogue, *Child of Europe,* by Wrenne Jarman, a piece classic in form but breathing with the pity and prophecy of a sensitive contemporary mind aware of the reproach lying at Humanity's door. Many entries in this competition derived from the spectacle of the war-ravaged lands in Europe and the Pacific, but I think Miss Jarman's best expresses the faith of the world's liberators who (in her fine phrase) "plan to storm the Citadel of the Heart."

Sixth in my choice is *St. Brandan Remembers* by Roger Lancelyn Green, a rhymed decasyllabic poem with a total effect of tranquillity and of youth's memories of the visible world preserved in the saint's scrolls and missals.

Other poems that stand out and have given me heart-and-mind searching are these: "Spirit of Fire and Rose", a lyric of thirty-six stanzas by T.W. Ramsey in a short metre which carries the sense on in a crystal cascade of sound; "The Ages of Man", an accomplished sonnet sequence with a latter-day burden, by B. R. Gibbs; "Sea Dream", a poem in ode form by R. Scott Frayn, containing many memorable lines; "The Seamen", an impressive description of the experiences of ships and seamen by J. Bates Maycock with a recurrent refrain:

> "And the engines thud their steady metre
> Of constant, unvarying revolutions,
> Causing us to make a steady rate of knots . . .";

"Green River", a lyrical metaphorical picture of the mind of Man, which has some similarity, despite its half-rhymes, with Sir John Squire's poem on the same theme, evoking pictures of the River Amazon; Wilfred H. Bartlett's attractive "Soliloquy in Summer"; "Harvest Near Castel Franco", a sun-shoe Browningesque poem of the soil and peasants by Lucy Carter Bredin, a clever American entry by John Bunker of Cincinnati, "Byron Parts with Shelley", which daringly tries to convey in blank verse Byron's fears for his brother-poet sailing off in his cockle-shell; 'Aquarius', with "The Rose Bewteen the Wheels", eloquently lamenting the mechanization of modern life and the decay of loving craftsmanship; a frolicsome poem in rhymed irregular metre by Donald Cowie called "The Right Book"; an ironical and at times frankly satirical sonnet-sequence, "Margherita", by Thomas Demarden Williams, containing many dexterous lines of this kind:

> "Love is selection side by side with sex,
> First line defence against the herd complex.

but lacking the final compulsion of art; Rita Peck's unrhymed lyrical poem, "Sword Out of Sheath", which has much beauty of conception and workmanship; "Cottage", an excellent lyrical piece celebrating the delights of a secluded country life, by Donald Lee Taylor; Harold Roemmele's "Before Theatre" in which he successfully conveys a series of pictures of an operating theatre:

> "None seem to realise what happened:
> That they saw one of themselves through pain
> And trust in universal conscientiousness,
> Give up the boundless spaces of his mind,
> As well as the body's intertwined
> Intricacies for the surgeon's aid.";

a very moving brief dialogue poem by Alice Lunt called "Poem for 1959" which poses and answers the war-questions of a generation now in the making; another short poem in the modern manner, describing Man's ceaseless torture of Man, "Siege of the City", by William Hough, in which I found much originality and beauty; Dallas Kenmare's "Shy Spring", which has something of the freshness and promise of the season she celebrates: the briefest lyric entry of the competition, Ruth Mills' charming unrhymed poem, "The White Swan"; Henrietta Hedley's moving short poem, "The Dead Soldier" with its heart-cry against the "bitterness of waste"; Heda Munro's very distinguished rhymed "Dialogue in Winter' with its lovely close:

> "But I must find Persephone whose breath
> Is very life, who wearing spring as clothes
> Has stayed unseen, and I would touch her face,
> And loving her, forget to think of death.";

another American entry, "A Defence Never Made", by Cullen Jones, which indicts both the Japanese savagery and "Scientific hands that blast with fury of unimaginative formula"; "Whitemantle", by Philip Eaton, which understandingly attempts to roll back the English centuries and to depict man's struggle and suffering from A.D.45 to the present day; a fine descriptive rhymed narrative of "Saint Wenceslaus", by J. R. Clemens, of Webster Groves, Missouri; an impressive entry by Geraldine Kalka Cash derived from Australian aboriginal folk-lore, "Namirra and the Four Brethren", which does all it sets out to do but fails to hold one Western mind, as so many similar poems have done since Hiawatha became relegated to choirs and festivals; and then another fine narrative poem on the theme of the Magdalen, "The Tale of Mary", by Mary Barrington, which has much beauty of feeling and form; and a curiously unequal yet compelling poem about a child of the industrial slums, "Ruth", by Irene Maunder; and finally, in these special notes, the grim poem of man's infamy to man "Belsen", by James Steel, with its haunting last line, "Cover our eyes and ears, and forget."

The entries have indeed been remarkably even, accomplished and satisfying. There have been far less of the elementary kind of adolescent rhyming with derivative lines and thoughts and well-rubbed images than I could have imagined. Regional poems, ritual poems, religious poems, mythological poems, seasonal poems, character poems, landscape poems, sea poems, garden poems, psycho-analytical poems, national and international poems, war and peace poems, and of course *love* poems poured into the Society in profuse abundance. Britain seems to be a nation of singing birds; and not only Britain, for entries came in from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium, Portugal, India and Burma. I thank and congratulate all those who have driven my critical faculty so hard; and especially I thank and congratulate the winner of the Prize, Mr. John Waller.

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE POEM

THE LOVELY AND THE DEAD

By JOHN WALLER

I

PROLOGUE

Tne trumpets and the clarions were to blame
That played up war when war was all the rage
Between the knights and women. As a game
They fought it out upon a shining stage
And afterwards retired for songs and love.
But soon it was the minstrel suffered loss
Who found himself conscripted and to save
The world he sang for answered force with force.
So mourn an end when songs no longer soothe,
Knowing the brightest and the bravest gone,
While all else is in wrack and sorrowfully
Weeps for another time when life bred love.
"Finish, good lady, the bright day is done;"
Shakespeare's Iras cried it most tenderly.

II

THE LOST

See fall, see fair, the lovely and the dead,
Passion a fainting and no solace there
For dear lost children who when all is said
Made carrion for history but somewhere

A legend to be told across the heart,
  In storms at winter lurking in the light
Of candles or in summer's gentle part
  A shadow touching lover but not quite
Detaching with the sensual sense of touch.
  If you could think the silent figures close
To more than ghosts, your motions were their ends
  Calling to their own place beyond your reach.
This is the scale of life that dreams impose;
  It is your sorrow not the earth pretends.

III

YOUTH

The cradle of a love is in sweet songs,
  The rivalry of hate not understood,
So hearing daily of a thousand wrongs
  I could not hear them calling for my blood.
Beauty was blood to me and energy
  Clamped like a pilgrim to my legs and arms
So bore me into action that a sea
  And desert hatred tore away the charms
Clothing me as a lover; in the fact
  All was too easily lost. I scarcely felt
The beauty and the strength leave suddenly
  Like naughty children taken in the act
Of stealing pears. These later years will melt
  Into a sand so stained with memory.

IV

PARTY

The dancing and the music made a life
  That all could feel who ever dealt with death;
Their way was sweet nostalgia with belief
  A growing youthfulness upon the breath
Of all the young that war had driven old.
  This magic and the thought of you away
Made all the laughter and the voices yield
  To calm fantastic settings for a play
We might have acted once and cried aloud
  To find it so unreal and yet so near.
You were the voices, you the sparkled hair,
  Your figure absent in the swaying crowd
Made all the rest as clumsy as a tear.
  I felt your presence, but you were not there.

V

THE AIRMAN

Ghost gliding heavenwards with narrow lips
  Through fury breaking over wildest skies
Is flyer's peril. As each bullet rips
  It is the body not the legend dies.
A falling death is falling gracefully
  To tenderness and love; some other mind
Shall wear the youth he left so carelessly
  Without a sorrow and no bitter wound.
I knew one once, an intimate of clouds,
  Who could have stayed, delighting where he chose,
Being a charmer, subtly wounding thus . . .
  But left to find his way in other deeds.
Now stars alone can tell the tales he knows;
  The stars that tell such tales are part of us.

VI

LOVERS

Fair fall, fair young, nor hear the lover cry
  For lover lost in a cruel wilderness
Where birds are bombers, flowers whisper "die,"
  And guns like trees sit hard and merciless.
Lonely is love when the first lover leaves,
  Hollow is heart where every horror slays
A former dear and daring flesh; it grieves
  Two lovers in their separate haunted ways
Of time and distance. If you seek a song
  Go to a ruined place within a dream—
A crazy person there will give you one,
  Who'll tell of love that started right, till wrong
Caught and destroyed a lover—this will seem
  The ghost still walking but the garden gone.

VII

THE SOLDIER

Merry was madman or amazed in dreams
  For under peril he could hear the play
Of innocent and splendid beside streams
  Forever urging: "Life, O life was gay."
So love was struggle till a struggle slain
  But deed was fierce invasion in the cold
Flat air of morning; in the distant line

He grasped all deeds like an unseeing child.
Heroic themes must find heroic measures—
To murder with a smile is to live well
In painted history—rather tell the fall
Of all that time held lovely and the pleasures
Of those who perished with more careful will
And in their deaths heard brighter voices call.

VIII

REFUGEES

The city was a wound upon their eyes
Reflecting other cities. They were ill
With final grief as when a mother dies
Leaving a clever only son to kill
The many years that go mocking along.
Death was no hope nor hope a death to them
Who could not hear except the inner song:
"You were the evil, so it was your blame."
Inside the heart they paid the penalty
For what they could not save or could not fear
In terms of building stronger for the end.
Now sorrow marks that distant memory
As bitter as a grievance that is near.
The dying heart is heartless as a friend.

IX

THE SAILOR

A clanging bell is sorrow on the waves
For lonely divers, daring to their dooms
Among some green surrender far from loves.
Water is peace and through that peace there looms
No hope of other peace, the sweep of gulls
Cries out into their eyes with all the life
That terror wounded. One last message calls:
"O where the thought is lives the legend safe."
Sailor has luck that luckless can admire;
But luck is loose and drowning may conclude
That luck is some wild city in the sea
To which the dying reach, the girls, the fire
In merry parlours, such brief interlude
Of happiness for swiftest memory.

X

THE POETS

Do not come near, for you may not approach
  Nor ever feel their burning sanctuary
Who have left perfect words for your reproach
  And their memorial. Another country
Buries the youth they sported on their lips,
  The smile with which each made the frozen choice;
These bring the harvest that nobody reaps
  To taunt you at that banquet where the voice
Of past things is remembered. They died young
  And for their dreams we love them. As you drink
Their ghost drinks back, reminds that what you are
  They could have been though better. On the tongue
Burst fiercely words more marvellous. Try to think
  Of eager music sucked from sound and air.

XI

DEATH

Death was the final darling, wild and true,
  Carver of battles, whirlwind over plains,
Was sudden or most subtle stroke that slew
  The busy vigour and the pulsing veins.
Death was an evil and in evil dealt,
  Was lonely phantom with the fatal streak
That put the lovely and the good to rout,
  Though merciful to weary and the sick.
For death was peace and peace was death to those
  Who in these years could never join themselves,
But were with loneliness of grief or fears
  Oppressed to such strange states as hating knows,
Where sorrow lurks and death with sorrow delves
  For that blind scaffold where the heart appears.

XII

THE DEAD

The dead are what we make them; they can lose
  Only by reputation; we may strike
A balance between heroes where we choose
  And deal such headline splendours as we like.
But they in dying had not thought of this
  Or if they had it was a grimmer jest

Than shells exploding, and the angry kiss
Of bullets striking deep into the chest.
"Unarm, Eros, the long day's task is done
And we must sleep." So Roman Antony
Prepared to die, perhaps thought of his first
Brave love for Cleopatra, then like one
Who knew the thing made up, sank wearily
Out of a land of fables to deep rest.

XIII

ARMISTICE

Pity is what we cherish for a friend
Not for an enemy, and only hate
Can satisfy a wrong. We may not lend
Pity to yielding that has come too late.
Pity must be deserved. We may not pardon
Until there is some good, then good with grief
Should take away the wrong that made us harden
Our hearts, bring to an enemy relief.
The pity of our dearest wish we owe
To all the splendid that the times have slain
And those who mourn the lost they held most dear.
Pity is for a friend not for a foe
And rises from the heart not from the brain.
A clever pity can breed only fear.

XIV

ENVOI (for ——)

Dear friend, on whose vitality I've stayed
This war-time weather out with solemn mirth,
Wear these words in your heart that you may fade
Less pleasing things upon a crying earth.
Be gentle to the kind and all who love
But angry to the proud who dare to hate,
Let words in their quick motion ever live
To tell the truth that you would celebrate.
For you the active and still dangerous part
When all the fighting and the shouting's done,
For you the vaulting gaiety that stays
Upon young limbs, never to lose the art
Of scaling cliffs and enemies, but shun
The soft sad charm that melts away sad days.

The Runner-up :

THE WELL

By THOMAS RUSSELL

It is quiet down here.
With solitary baleful eye
I peer
Into my slimy telescope,
Up to the distant disc of sky.
Long, long it is since spinning rope
And bucket clashed from wall to wall,
Reverberating hollowly.
I brood on quietness and death,
Where silence, like a muted breath,
Freezes the starling's colloquy,
The plaintive curlew's lonely call.

A child came here to play.
I saw him looking down on me
To-day.
He spoke his name. With bell-like tone
I sang it back, till suddenly
He laughed, and dropped a small round stone
Which sifted to my rocky floor.
Kaleidoscopically bright
The plate of sky-space spun around,
In ecstasies of light and sound,
In phantasies of sound and light,
Until the ripples rolled no more.

And when my eye was clear,
I stared at him, as if to say
Come here,
Where it is secret, dark, and cold.
For every pleasure man must pay,
The debt is new, the stipend old.
Nor did I call to him in vain:
With limbs close-pinioned down he fell,
Precipitous as stooping hawk,
As straight as withe or lily stalk.——
Within the fastness of the well
It is quiet down here again.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT

It has been the custom of the Premium Editor for some time past to deliver to entrants, successful and otherwise, a disquisition on the writing of poetry. I am sorry I do not feel able to do this; I do not know of any rules according to which poetry can be written. Even injunctions as to what to avoid are not of much value, as so much depends on the equipment and approach of the individual mind at work. One assumes that to most competitors the obvious pitfalls are already known, and my perusal of a large and varied collection of entries for this contest fully justifies that assumption.

The general level attained was in my opinion remarkably high, and I could find no poem standing out from the others sufficiently to warrant my giving it the whole of the premium. The commended class merged imperceptibly into the highly commended, and four poems in the latter class seemed to me to be of sufficient extra merit to warrant my dividing the prize equally between them.

I take them in alphabetical order, and the first is Mrs. Lucy Bredin's "Song of Rachel Marsh." This is an original conception, and the fantasy and magic suggestive of *La Belle au Bois Dormant* are well sustained by a clever and subtle use of the device of question and answer. The whole scheme of broken rhythms with the balancing of rhymes and half-rhymes is skilful and suggests to me the broken patterns of reflections on troubled water. The poem has that suggestive and evocative force poetry must have. It tells little of Rachel Marsh; but you know her.

Joan Gilbert's "The Winds of God" is a strong poem and the wind sings in it. This poem sings. The glittering scales of music are sometimes loud, sometimes soft, but they are always there. The use of alliteration—so often overdone—is very good here. Look at the second verse especially for this—no sibilant could have driven home this rush of force better than the "m" does. It is the sigh of the wind before it gathers its strength again. I don't like "a-sighing"—and that "a" wasn't really necessary. But I like this poem.

A quieter poem is Lieut. J. H. N. Pope's "The Miracle." A quiet poem—but so is light quiet in the afternoons of September, and the grass in the first grey of dawn. Not an easy thing to take a worn theme like roses and spring and the decay of time and make of them a poem that holds the attention. This writer has learnt the art—particularly necessary in reflective poetry—of bringing individual verses as well as the whole poem to a strong climax.

> "And at the summer's end the Stranger Fear
> Knows not my garden, nor my garden Death."

The last poem of the four, "The Red Sleeve," by Michael Redgrove, pours out like glowing steel from the crucible. So fast is it poured that he can hardly seize it and work it. But he does so, as he must, for a poem must have art as well as force; the poet must master his medium, however strongly it may burn. So this coruscation of sound and fire is seen to have a pattern, and the lovely things take their appointed places. There are images here of excellent beauty, and a sustained pride in the song which forges it as deftly as a sword should be forged.

Among the highly commended poems I was glad to note some very fine sonnets, particularly from Helen Brietzcke, Frances Burkitt and Muriel Symmons. In this group also I should like particularly to mention J. T. Brockway, whose fine poem "Winter of Impotence" failed only through a certain looseness of construction to gain a share of the Premium. The control was just not quite tight enough; but still a good and moving poem.

T. W. Ramsey.

The full lists are as follows:—

Highly Commended

Rachel Bates, Ambleside.
Helen Shackleton Brietzcke, Harrow.
J. T. Brockway, The Hague, Holland.
Frances Heneage Burkitt, Frant.
Constance Farmer, Farnham.
Norah M. Gibbs, Bideford.
Pauline Huthwaite, Grantham.
Phyllis Lyth, Threlkeld.
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe.

Commended

Capt. J. C. S. Bearne, Exeter.
Thetis Blacker, Shamley Green.
Louise Brettell, St. Albans.
Jenefer Carlyon, London, W.2.
Stefanie Fone, Hatch End.
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol.
Ursula Tighe Hopkins, Hampstead.
Mary Stella Ling, Danehill.
J. M. Mills, Roydon-by-Ware.
Nancy Pollok, Tettenhall.
Celia Randall, Co. Down, Ireland.
John Wheatley, Scarborough.
E. J. Worthington, Rossett.

A Song of Rachel Marsh

"Old white house, at once so dear,
Who lives here?"
"Stranger, I forget to-day.
Question them that brightly see,
Climbers of the garden wall,
Little ones that cling to me.
Jasmine, Judas-tree and rose,
Ask of those."

"Jasmine, does your mistress smile?"
"Wait awhile!
Even in dark weather,
She can hear the robin call;
She can hold her hand to me,
Even though my fire is small.
Spark on spark, I mount to warm
Her I charm."

"Judas-tree, can *she* not sing
Ere the spring?"
"Hid by vases on her sills,
She can sing on her violin;
Music sent through sprays all sweet
Makes love's season safe within,
But, since love sighs, so may she,
Most terribly."

"Cheer her, O her close bouquets,
And tell her ways!"
"We in our lustre vases
Give welcome, with her,
To the year, as to April
That can weep without despair.
The heart that can forgive
Must bravely live."

"Blushful rose by kitchen door,
Answer more."
"She sets bowls of clabber-milk
Where the cat and kettle purr;
Honesty and faithfulness,
In a maid's dress, wait on her;
Underneath my arbour, she
Pours out tea."

"Turquoise-latticed rose of red,
Is she wed?"
"Stranger, go, you may not take her!
For she came to her home
Like a present received,
Like a sharp spade to the loam,
Like the wildfowl to her pond
That they found."

LUCY BREDIN.

The Winds of God

The wind that sweeps through the cities,
  Astringent and strong and cold,
Repeats with deadly insistence
  A creed that is fierce and old.

The wind that moans in the ruins
  And mates with the midnight sky
Demands the fullest atonement—
  That many be doomed to die.

The wind that rustles the branches
  And ruffles the mountain stream
Withdraws from man and his violence,
  And whispers its right to dream.

The wind that roams in the desert,
  And lashes the grey-green sea;
That sets the poplars a-sighing
  Along roads of Normandy;

The wind of Italian summers;
  The wind of the Russian snows;
The wind that flutters the tulip
  And scatters the tumbling rose—

These winds that sigh for the fallen
  And blow through the courts of God,
These capture a greater mercy;
  These smite with a truer rod.

They sing to all who will listen
  A prayer that will never cease:
"Revenge will not raise the slaughtered;
  Remember—and walk in peace."

Joan Gilbert.

The Miracle

Thus would I stroll with you through life
  As through a garden set with quiet lawns,
Whose walled coolness knows no harsher strife
  Than stirs the earth when spring's first daylight dawns.

In such a garden to the tuned ear
  Soft truths are whispered on a flower-breath,
And at the summer's end the Stranger Fear
  Knows not my garden, nor my garden Death.

Love, linger by this rose-bed for awhile
  And ponder on the promise of the now
Unblossomed bud, whose elder sisters smile,
  Conscious of beauty from the laden bough.

For when this bud has blossomed and is strewn
  Petal by petal at the wind's sweet whim,
As pearls upon a garment may be sewn
  And sicken in their exile and grow dim,

Another springtime will the garden fill
  With loveliness lain latent in the sear;
The rose-tree has her ancient secret still,
  Craftsman of beauty in the waking year;

And all life's mystery within her lies,
  Why women love and why the poets sing
The common miracle before your eyes,
  The bud, the blossom and returning spring.

J. H. N. Pope.

The Red Sleeve

I have taken your name for a sign and made it my blazonry:
there shall no doubting be
nor any halt to this high urgency.

Sky and the sun and the delicate moon have seen
how smote the keen
white blade the leapings of my heart between.

Your name is a song and a shield in the mists of the morning:
all other names scorning
I have bound to my brow this name for pride and adorning.

This is the charge I bear in the stress of streets, in the mart,
that remote and apart
you shrined are in the secret depths of my heart:

And whatever of dark despair sardonic gods may fling,
this song, this shining thing
my heart shall hear, and sing.

Michael Redgrove.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL AT THE POETRY SOCIETY CELEBRATION FOR THE ALICE MEYNELL CENTENARY

11th October, 1947, at the Guildhall Art Gallery, London

Alice Meynell, my mother, was one of the most loved and revered women of her day—a longish day, beginning in 1847 and ending in 1922, when she was just seventy-six years old. She is our text this afternoon. What was her context?—her parentage? Of her father, who loved both scholarship and the arts, but being without ambition, was also without achievement—of her father she wrote after his death:

> "He was not inarticulate, he was only silent. He had an exquisite style from which to refrain. His personality made laws for me; it was a subtle education."

And now as to her mother: Christiana Weller was her mother's name, and she had beauty and talent, and when, in 1844, Dickens heard her play the piano at one of his readings he wrote:

> "I cannot joke about Miss Weller, for she is too good; and interest in her (spiritual young creature that she is) has become a sentiment with me. Good God, what a madman I should seem if the incredible feeling I have conceived for that girl could be made plain to anyone."

He said he couldn't joke about Miss Weller. But he could. For he visited her and wrote this jingle for the album which to his surprise, even chagrin, she did not produce:

> I put in a book once by hook and by crook
> The whole race (as I thought) of a feller
> Who happily pleased the town's taste much diseas'd
> And the name of this person was Weller.
>
> I find to my cost that one Weller I lost,
> Cruel destiny so to arrange it!
> I love her dear name which has won me some fame
> But, Great Heaven, how gladly I'd change it!

And it was Dickens who introduced her to his great friend T. J. Thompson. They fell in love, and married, and had two children—Alice, my mother, and Elizabeth (Lady Butler) who won fame as painter of the Roll Call.

My grandparents took their children to Italy, and brought them up there: and through all my mother's life it was from Italy—its peasants, its skies and trees and architecture—that she renewed and refreshed herself. Italy was her second, her almost native, land; but for Italian, her second and almost native tongue, she had no more than an easy liking, holding it to be too obviously musical in comparison with what she regarded as the incomparable language for poetry—the English language. My mother disliked intensely being classified as one of the two, or three, or four (according to the views of the writer) finest English poetesses. She offered herself to be criticised, not as a woman—all-woman as she was—but simply as a writer. And how real was that double claim, to be a woman in her life and a poet and creative writer in her work, you must judge by two things: first, by the fact that she enjoyed a most happy married life through forty-five years and that though she was thirty before she married she bore eight children; and second, by her essays and poems and the captivating effect they have had on at least three generations of critics. Of the essays I will say this—that the great contemporaries of her middle life (such as Coventry Patmore, George Meredith, Henry Newbolt, Walkley of *The Times,* W. E. Henley, William Sharp, Lional Johnson) knew her and admired her for her prose much more than for her poetry. This was not a choice for them between one form of her expression and the other, but was due to the simple fact that in the middle and greatly fruitful period of her life she wrote few poems and a great deal of what Meredith called her "princely journalism." That journalism itself is in two parts—first, her contributions to the general run of magazines and papers, and secondly her editing with my father of no less than three publications of their own. While she was betrothed but not yet married to my father they planned a literary weekly. It did not in fact appear until three years later, in 1880, and then only for seven numbers. Its price was 2d., and my parents were proprietors, editors, sub-editors, publishers, office-boys and chief contributors. Its whole history can be summarised now in one phrase—it managed to interest and please Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Then it died! Next, in 1881, my father undertook the editing, at Cardinal Manning's request, of *The Weekly Register,* a Catholic newspaper. My mother was his dutiful colleague, and for no less than eighteen years they struggled on bravely and painfully with this duty. But over-lapping this was *Merry England,* a shilling monthly, which they owned and edited and largely wrote for twelve years. My sister Viola describes our parents "silent and desperate with work on the press-days." *Merry England* was a not too burdensome task. But when we children asked what they were busy about, if it was the *Weekly Register* the answer had a desperate sound. When Wilfrid Meynell was ill or away, the whole task of editing and sub-editing was my mother's. In a letter to Coventry Patmore she says: "I have just translated for the *Register* the Pope's letter to the Hungarian Bishops—without

pranks. Sometimes I make His Holiness quote our poets!" and here is a letter from my mother to my father on one of his rare holidays:

> "We have got on only too well. Never again shall I fear taking the Reggie [*The Weekly Register*] for you. I am going in at a canter with both hands down. But another time I shall ask you not to send copy to the printer but to let me have it; there has been some duplication already and I expect to see more in the proofs to-day. I am perfectly capable of turning out an amusing *Register* with no help except that of Francis [Thompson].
>
> "Coventry Patmore writes of a talkative dinner party in which he missed my silence."

But quite apart from these were her own contributions to "outside" publications. First in Henley's *Scots Observer* and then anonymously in a weekly article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* she had all reading England as her eager and greatly inquisitive readers. A page of her account book (shown at the National Book League's Exhibition) records the number of "pars" she contributed to the "Office Window" column of the *Daily Chronicle* from 1st September to 8th December, 1916. It notes fifteen paragraphs and a total payment of £1 16s. "Princely journalism" did not earn quite princely pay. My father, a much more prolific paragrapher, was also specially esteemed: he was paid at twice A.M's. rate. And in a letter to Patmore about her "columns" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*—weekly columns from 1894 to 1900—she writes "I think that they pay me £3 a column, which is excellent."

When I say that her great contemporaries "knew her for her prose," I speak literal truth, since it was in nearly every case an admiration first for the unknown and unnamed, then for the named but still unknown which caused Meredith and his compeers to seek out her acquaintance and to find and found their love and admiration for her as a woman.

In the early 'nineties her girlhood's poems were almost forgotten, her magnificent later poems, written in the last decade of her life, were yet to come. Thus her contemporaries who first made her fame, worshipped her for her prose. It is sad to realise that they never knew the full and finest flowering of her mind in those last poems. What they did know was a critic of rare firmness and power of anlysis; a writer who could deal with Ruskin's economics or architecture or philology or French and Italian idiom, or Gibbon's style in prose, and many another recondite subject with authority, with rich beauty and with a lean wit: and always with an integrity which honoured its subject and honoured also the weight and movement of the English language which she held so dear. Her essays show her consistency, born not of habit but of just and sensitive free will.

Her young poetry was musical and sentimental; but her later poetry was packed tight with thought and suggestion. Mr. Frederick Page will ingeniously and rightly show the connection between the two. Here is an

example of the first—the sonnet which Ruskin said was the most beautiful ever written by a woman. My mother told me thirty years later: "How much more pleased I should have been if he had said merely 'a good sonnet,!"

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song,
O just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

That is young poetry. Later she would gladly have withdrawn it, but her public and her husband would not have it so. Here was the only large and lasting dispute, I think, between my parents. It lasted all through my mother's life. In the year 1913 appeared a volume of her Collected Poems, in which the two former volumes were reprinted, and a number of new poems added. Before she started for a visit to Italy the arrangement of the book was being discussed. She wished that the early poems should be placed at the end of the book, instead of in correct chronology. There is a note from her to my father across the outside of which she wrote: "Quick, before I lose courage!" in which she says: "I have just received your letter about the poems. Yes, place them as you like them best. I cannot say I like that order but I can sincerely say that I trust your judgment. Or perhaps, even more truly, that making you unhappy about the book is intolerable to me. Oh, let the word *Early* be conspicuous!" Some of the volumes followed one order, some the other; and from Italy she wrote: "So some of my volumes have the cart before the horse and others the spirited, thoroughbred horse before the rather conventional old cart. Think of that now!" Indeed the last chapter is only written now. I have just edited an edition of her poems for Hollis & Carter in which the order is as she would have had it.

My mother's view of poetry, in its heyday of Victorian grandiloquence, when there was a special poets vocabulary, is told in a lovely later poem. In one of her last poems she compares the similes, raptures, metaphors, what she calls the "fair and flagrant things" of poetry, first to the simple inmost shrine of a great temple, and then to the Epiphany kings laden

with gold and frankincense and myrrh. The finest poetry, she says, is at the journey's end:

> Plain, behind oracles, it is; and past
> All symbols, simple; perfect, heavenly-wild;
> The song some loaded poets reach at last—
> The kings that found a Child.

Do you share my feeling that she herself here reaches that inner simplicity?—

> The song some loaded poets reach at last—
> The kings that found a Child.

Do you discover the artifice of the verse: not forced on you but upholding the lines—the alliteration of "song" and "some," of "loaded" and "last"—in the heavy repeated vowel of loaded and poets and last.

I have said that Alice Meynell was the most loved of women. She had the love of her husband—my father, now ninety-five years old; still in this year of her Centenary celebration strongly alive in all his faculties. She had the love of her family—seven children who grew up in the most devoted and familiar relationship: loving her as children love a mother benevolent in all her thoughts, beneficent in all her actions; but, besides this private relation with her, sharing with the world, though at closer hand, her public attributes: her domestic majesty, her grace, her judgment, her poetry and her fame. My sister Viola tells how when I was five years old I paraded the house with a poster of the *Saturday Review*, which was "running" my mother for Poet Laureate. My young gloat was: "we are well off for famousness now." But this intense love within the family was far from all. And she was adored by two great men of her day, both high poets—Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson; and, oddly, fantastically, it was her great friendship with another writer, George Meredith, which, they felt, hindered and intercepted their own relations with her.

Coventry Patmore was almost an old man and she was forty-five when they first became personal friends—but that was nearly twenty years after they had first met each other's work. In 1874, before my mother's first book was published, she received this letter from Aubrey de Vere:

> 'Dear Miss Alice Thompson . . . I must tell you how much my friend Coventry Patmore, with whom I have been staying, admired your poem. He has sent you his "Angel in the House". . . .'

This precious copy of "The Angel in the House" is shown at the National Book League's Exhibition. It is inscribed in 1874—

Alice Meynell from Coventry Patmore

and in 1877, a month after her betrothal to my father, it is re-dedicated in her hand—

To Wilfrid from Alice.

Then, eleven years later, my mother wrote an article on Patmore in *Merry England.* This brought a formal "Dear Mrs. Meynell" letter from Patmore. But still they did not meet—or not to realise each other—until the passage of another seven years, when each had written more than once impersonally of the other's work. She had the most fervent love for his poetry and admiration for his intellect; he loved her character, her personality, her work. What a strange closeness, what a hopeless incompatibility, was here! His personal worship brought him within the nearest range that anyone could attain to her scrupulous life. The ordinary measure of closeness is acceptance: for them, it was denial. That was his distinction—he was allowed to come at least close enough for denial.

As Mr. Page has written: "Patmore's and Alice Meynell's recognition of each other had been public, and they parted secretly in public; and in public, secretly, he endured the tender pain of her pardon". For in the *Pall Mall Gazette,* in 1895, she printed these lines anonymously for his eyes:

Why wilt thou chide
Who hast attained to be denied?
Oh learn, above
All price is my refusal, Love.
My sacred Nay
Was never cheapened by the way
Thy single sorrow crowns thee lord
Of an unpurchasable word.

O Strong, O pure!
As yea makes happier loves secure,
I vow thee this
Unique rejection of a kiss.
I guard for thee
This jealous sad monopoly.
I seal this honour thine; none dare
Hope for a part in thy despair.

But what made the tragedy of Patmore's later life was rather that neglect which must always seem to exist when of two people one concentrates entirely on their personal relationship and the other only in moments left over from other happy absorptions. Fatal inequality! Without this love she was whole; he was not. In his distress, Coventry Patmore turns for sympathy to Francis Thompson, who also had laid his adoration at the feet of Alice Meynell. In a moving letter, he says to Thompson:

"*Dieu et ma Dame,*" is the legend of both of us.

"My heart goes forth to you as it goes to no other man; for are

we not singularly visited by a great common delight, and a great common sorrow?"

It was true also of Francis Thompson that without his love she was whole, he was not. His love was almost an irrelevance in her life. The fact that his great love poems were addressed to her was a thing she never even referred to, either to family or friend. She read as literature, hardly as homage, the poems he wrote to her even when they were as personal as this:

> Hers is the face whence all should copied be
> Did God make replicas of such as she.

To her Francis Thompson was a poet, and a child—always a child, though he was but twelve years younger. That is how she wrote to him "My dear child" . . .

There were in fact three great relevancies in Alice Meynell's life, leaving no voids craving to be filled. Religion, literature and family—and she was all lover for all these.

Her absorbing love of literature often made literature itself her theme in verse. The fact that Alice Meynell was alive before the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth in 1864, and after the tercentenary of his death in 1916, produced the poem in which she makes her own years enclose the whole of his briefer ones; so that she invokes him thus:

> O thou city of God
> My waste lies after thee, and lies before.

A like idea possessed her when she was about to pass the age at which her father had died, in this poem addressed to her father:

> Oh by my filial tears
> Mourned all too young, Father! On this my head
> Time yet will force at last the longer years,
> Claiming some strange respect for me from you, the dead.
>
> Nay, nay! Too new to know
> Time's conjuring is, too great to understand.
> Memory has not died; it leaves me so—
> Leaning my fading brow on your unfaded hand.

And because it was her theme, how could I escape an echo of her feeling when, quite lately, some very early poems of hers which had never been printed were discovered in a writing-book of hers made when she was seventeen years old? From my greater age I saw too, I newly met, my mother as a young girl in those long-hidden lines.

But what kind of woman was she? Not all Goddess, not all saint, not the very Muse surely. But that is how most people saw her: that is how they wrote of her. To her children as they became adolescent she was

someone to be protected—from bores, from finding her own 'bus routes, from undertaking works of mercy beyond her strength, and to her husband —a writer in his own right, but always willing to be her impressario rather than his own—to her husband, someone to be protected from her own rigid judgments and prejudices. She had a number of these decisive attitudes—that Gibbon had helped to corrupt the English language with automatic phrases like: "the brutal and licentious soldiery," or "flushed with success," or that the Irish have no humour. I think now she was over-protected, even a little constrained with care. Our view of her—the family view—was that she was complete—completely just, holy, sure, happy. But does complete happiness reside in such a poem as this, in which she addressed Sleep?

> Come and release me; bring
> My irresponsible mind; come in thy hours;
> Draw from my soul the sting
> Of wit that trembles, consciousness that cowers.
>
> For if night comes without thee
> She is more cruel than day. But thou, fulfil
> Thy work thy gifts about thee—
> Liberty, liberty, from this weight of will.

This is human and heroic as well. But I remember—remember now with regret that I didn't realise then, and so couldn't pander to them—her unheroic little vanities; her hiding of her age, her careful disguise too of the marks of that age, her intense pleasure in praise—"recognition" as it was then called, the only possession which she was willing to keep because she could not share this with the poor or the unhappy. I think of her serious dismay when the household arrangements for dinner guests went wrong and food, for example, was inadequate as it so often was. Can you be the mother of eight children and work and work and work to house and feed and teach them and not be human? And human, how spiritually human, is this passage from a letter, written in her old age—but her mind was never old—to a nun who was her confidant:

> "All my troubles are little, old, foolish, trivial, as they always were —the troubles of my spiritual life, I mean. But as to sorrow, my failure of love to those that loved me can never be cancelled or undone. So I never fail in a provision of grief for any night of my life."

So she made fantastic atonement for neglect which was itself a liberal largesse; so Patmore, so Francis Thompson, so George Meredith, so her lovely and devoted American friend Agnes Tobin, received at length the concentration of her attention in long years of wakeful and prayerful nights.

To be just to my father, as she was just; to be devoted to my father, as she was devoted, I end my piece with words which she wrote to him:

Home, home from the horizon far and clear,
  Hither the soft wings sweep;
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near
  The dovecote doors of sleep.

Oh, which are they that come through sweetest light
  Of all these homing birds?
Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?
  Your words to me, your words!

SEA-SPRAY

I saw the great white breakers rearing in the air,
Tossing their foaming storm-crests to the salt-spray wind,
Breaking against the buttresses of sea-torn rock;
Behind them all the plunge and rolling of the sea.

I saw, and I stirred to the endless rhythm of water,
Grey foam-tipped water on a rocky shore;
I rejoiced with the mists of the spray on the waterface,
And this question rose in my heart and made life on my lips.

'Is not the fire on the sea, my beloved,
More glorious than all that we have on earth?
For the sea-foam shall live when the flowers have perished,
When the forests are dead, the green grass withered,
And our hearts are dust that is sterile, and dry, and dead.'

STUART C. LAUCHLAN

SHAKESPEARIAN EMENDATIONS—No. 6

As You Like It, III, 2, 406, starts the following excerpt from Rosalind's speech to Orlando, in which she tells him of her cure for love. (Spelling and punctuation according to the First Folio)—

> I—would now like him, now loath him:—now weepe for him, then spit at him; that I drave my Sutor *from his mad humor of love, to a living humor of madnes* which was to forsweare the ful stream of ye world, and to live in a nooke meerly Monastick: and thus I cur'd him, and this way wil I take upon mee to wash your Liver as cleane as a sound sheepes heart, that there shal not be one spot of Love in't.

As he was much attracted by the "prettie youth", Orlando agreed to undergo the cure.

Had the underlined words appeared in the Folio as "mad humor of love—loving humor of madness," it would not have occurred to anyone to weaken the antithesis by changing "loving" to "living." If that view is accepted, it proves alteration of "living" to "loving," as suggested by Johnson, would be an improvement. But many commentators, including Furness, White, Cowden Clarke, Jagger and the Cambridge and Warwick editors, have not followed his lead, so I have written this chapter in his support.

Rosalind's aim was to persuade Orlando to undergo her "cure," but, using the word "living," the phrase appears to mean "from being madly in love to a temporary state of real madness." which was enough to make Orlando decline her proposal, whereas "a *loving* humor of madness,' is a fair equivalent to being madly in love, so that, if a change at all, it would not be for the worse. Rosalind was too witty and wise to have risked failure by using the wrong word. She kept her remarks from being too serious by using the word "humour," thus making the "madness" merely temporary. "Humour" had that effect in The Merry Wives of Windsor, II, 3, 80, "see what humour he is in." From their comments, this effect of "humour" appears to have been overlooked by Cowden Clarke, the Cambridge, the Warwick and others. The poet used "mad" with similar light meaning in Midsummer Night's Dream, II, 1, 170 "Will make man or woman *madly dote* upon the next live creature that it sees."

III, 5, 10. Phebe says—

> Thou tellst me there is murder in mine eye,
> 'Tis pretty sure, and very probable,
> That eyes that are the frailst, and softest things,
> Who shut their coward gates on atomyes,
> Should be called tyrants, butchers, murtherers.

I have consulted eight editions, which range over a period of eighty

years, commencing in 1865, and, without exception, they add a comma after "pretty," thus crediting Phebe with three comments, in the second line, on what Silvius has just told her; of which the first ("pretty"), even though spoken ironically, was a queer description to apply to a statement that a girl's eyes were "butchers, murderers," and the second ("sure") is reduced by the third ("very probable") from its state of certainty. Only two editors, Cowden Clarke and the Cambridge, explain why they added the comma and they agree that "sure" means "surely" but in that case, a note of exclamation would appear to be called for. Without the additional comma "'Tis pretty sure" has the obvious meaning of 'Tis fairly certain," but, with it, there is ambiguity. Had Shakespeare intended the line to be read as the editors have it, he would have inserted the comma, so its absence tells against them.

It appears that, for over a century, all editors have been lulled into acceptance of the intercalated comma and its implications, by Furness, editor of the play, in the famous Variorum edition of Shakespeare, who said of "pretty sure," "Note the almost comic turn which the omission of the comma (after 'pretty') gives this phrase. Of course, as Douce points out, 'sure' is here 'surely'," but there is also a little merriment in the way later editors have bowed to Furness's decision. As a matter of fact, there *is* a comic turn when the interloping comma is removed, for, in her simplicity, Phebe repeated herself, the meaning of "pretty sure" and "very probable" being identical. Furness spoke as though "the almost comic turn" was a detriment, but the play is avowed to be a comedy. As pointed in the Folio, the five lines are a delightful mixture of beauty and humour, and it is a pity to spoil them by ill-judged punctuation.

" 'Tis pretty sure" is matched, regarding the meaning of "pretty" in All's Well, II, 3, 212, "to be a pretty wise fellow," and it was thus used by Shakespeare's contemporaries.

The one-syllabled "frailst" in the third of the quoted lines, does not appear to have been challenged, yet it is an ugly and unnecessary curtailment of a beautiful word, to which it gives a stiff knee, so that it can no longer "come trippingly on the tongue." Only two lines on "and" is not inserted after "butchers" and I submit it was likewise omitted after "frailest," which was written in full. This is proved by the comma after "frailst," which calls for a pause which, however, it would be a mistake to give. It appears that whoever knocked the "e" out of "frailest", put in "and" to maintain metre, but failed to see the comma was no longer wanted. All editors I have consulted have removed it for him!

> That eyes that are the frailst and softest things,
> Who shut their coward gates on atomies.

What are atomies? Most editors pass the word without comment, thus taking it for granted that eyes shut them out. The Cambridge says the idea embodied in the above two lines "surely comes from the same

corner of Shakespeare's brain as "more soft and sensible Than are the tender horns of cockled snails." but even if such be the case, it does not supply the definition required. Irving quotes Aldis Wright "motes in the sunbeams"; anything so small that it cannot be made less." but that involves splitting the atom! Cowden Clarke quotes Bullokar, 1616, to the same effect as Aldis Wright, but also mentions Henley's "Atomies are those minute particles discernible in a stream of sunshine that breaks into a darkened room." That is, no doubt, what "motes in the sunbeams" means, but as eyes do not shut against such trifles (being unaware of their presence until the arrival of the sunbeams), it is evident that Shakespeare was not referring to them in the above lines: I am confident it was *midges* he had in mind. Anyone who has had one of these tiny insects enter his eye, knows his eye immediately shut upon it, and was with difficulty re-opened until the intruder was removed. Romeo and Juliet, I, 4, 57, Queen Mab—

comes,
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little *atomies*
Athwart mens' noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces of the smallest spider's web;—
Her whip of cricket's bone; the lash of film;
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat—

As everything else in the last five lines of this description is drawn from the insect world, the idea is inescapable that Mab's "team of atomies" was of very small insects that can fly, and midges answer to the requirements in all respects.

Keats had the Shakespearian concept of atomies, for he wrote—

atomies
That buzz about our slumbers like brain-flies,
Leaving us fancy-sick.

IV, 1, 10/19, is as follows, except that, in order to simplify the reading, I have added the pair of brackets near the end of the speech. Jaques says—

> I have neither the Schellers melancholy which is emulation: nor the musitians, which is fantasticall; nor the Courtiers, which is proud: nor the Souldiers, which is ambitious; not the Lawiers, which is politick: nor the Ladies which is nice: nor the Lovers, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine owne (compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundrie contemplation of my travells), in which by often rumination, wraps me in a most humourous sadnesse.

Emendators of the above speech are in two groups, of which, one

omits "in" from "in which," and the other changes "by often rumination" to "*my* often rumination," but my view is that no word need be changed and that it is merely a case of words being put in the right order; that the true construction is as follows:

> I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical;—but it is a melancholy of mine own (compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and, indeed, by the sundry contemplation of my travels), rumination in which often wraps me in a most humourous sadness.

The meaning of part of the above emendation is "extracted from many objects, and, indeed, *extracted* by the sundry contemplation of my travels." Like many other words in the Folio, "by" and "rumination" got misplaced and all I have done is to put them back. Possibly the speech, in the copy used for the Folio, was dictated to a scribe by an old actor who relied on his memory?

As regards "most humourous sadness." The Warwick says "Dowden's 'prepense' comes very near the meaning of 'humorous'," but the two words have nothing in common, as "prepense" means "premeditated." As Jaques had just said (IV, 1, 4) that he loved melancholy "better than laughing," it is obvious "humorous sadness means "amusing sadness," for he *enjoyed* it, as many women enjoy "a good cry" at the pictures. Jonson, in 1599, employed the cognate word "humorist" in a similar sense, "To turn actor and a humorist" and Colgrave defined "humorousness" in 1621 as "toyishness." Jaques witty retort to Rosalind's declaration that "Those that are in the extremity of either" melancholy or laughing "are abominable fellows" (IV, 1, 5), was that he was equally divided between the two conditions and therefore in no danger of being in the extremity of either. In view of the above, Cowden Clarke's definition of "humorous sadness" as "full of strange humours" will not do, nor will Jagger's "whimsical" pass for "humourous." My five other editions pass the phrase without comment so we are without the advantage of their ideas on the subject.

Rosalind wanted to meet Orlando instead of staying to talk to Jaques, and from the opening of the scene until Jaques departure, it was a battle of wits between them after he had opened with "I prithee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee" and she had replied "They say you are a melancholy fellow." This accounts for the clever speech I have quoted, which, on analysis, is found to say nothing! He professes to explain his particular brand of melancholy; mentions at length what it is and is not, but concludes as he started, that it is "melancholy" (often tinged with humour), for "melancholy" and "sadness" are synonyms.

The Cambridge says of the speech—

> Maginn (1860) declared this speech to be in blank verse and attempted to rearrange accordingly. The result made what Furness rightly calls "rather ragged verse." Yet it can hardly be doubted

that the speech was once verse, which Shakespeare has re-written as prose, the most obvious indication of this being the last few lines, which, with the opening words of Rosalind's rejoinder, if the slight change from "By my faith" to "I' faith" be allowed, make excellent and indubitable verse. Thus:

> The sundry contemplation of my travels,
> In which my often rumination wraps me
> In a most humorous sadness.
> Ros. A traveller!
> I' faith, you have great reason to be sad.

Jaques' gibe at blank verse (line 29) makes it quite certain, of course, that Shakespeare deliberately converted the verse into prose.

I am in hearty disagreement with all this. The Cambridge editors quote Furness only sufficiently to leave the impression that he agreed with Maginn, but thought the resultant verse of poor quality, but his full remarks (in the "Variorum Shakespeare") were—

> Rather ragged verse it must be owned. I should prefer to call it metric prose. There would be a lack of harmony in giving Jaques a single speech in ragged blank verse in a scene where every other speech is prose.

therefore, it is evident Furness would have totally disagreed with their statement that "it can hardly be doubted that the speech was once verse." Jaques' gibe at blank verse was merely his excuse for terminating an argument in which he was making no headway.

In order to turn the four lines into verse, they have to change "By my faith" to "I' faith," and I submit that disqualifies the last line, leaving only three lines out of the twelve that have any semblence of verse, and I have proved that "in which by often rumination wraps me" should be "rumination in which often wraps me," in which form the line will not scan. What is left over of verse (only one line, I think) can be attributed to Shakespeare's habitual use of verse resulting sometimes in his unconsciously writing a line in heroic measure, as may have been the case with the said line ("The sundry contemplation of my travels") and in Brutus' prose speech (Caes, III, 2).

They say "The First Folio is our sole authority for the text." so what they could discover therein is about all they have for their confident assertions that Shakespeare re-drafted the play, in the course of which he turned Jaques' speech (and other parts of the play) from poetry into prose, and that he *forgot* one item (page 100) while so doing and (96) *forgot* "some material points in the plot." I submit these somewhat iconoclastic views should not go unchallenged. To turn poetry into prose would, in many cases, be on a par with turning diamonds into carbon, and to make it believable that the poet thus destroyed the value of his own work, unimpeachable evidence is required. I cannot find it in their pages 93-108, or the "Notes."

They are uncomplimentary in advance to those who disagree with them, and as I am of that number, I submit I have a right to complain, and to issue a disclaimer on my own behalf. They say (95) "lest any one should *pretend*—that Shakespeare's prose had a rhythm of its own," they mention (94) "the most *sceptical*—of critics" and (95) "*our sceptic*" and (95) "There is really no *escaping* the facts"—from which it seems they are under the impression that, if he could, their critic would like to escape from the "facts" they have provided. I have pretended nothing in the above and do not desire to escape from facts, but to establish them.

At IV, 3, 20, the following is said by Silvius and Rosalind—

SIL. No, I protest, I know not the contents,
Phebe did write it.
ROS. Come, come, you are a foole,
And turn'd into the extremity of love.
I saw her hand, she has a leatherne hand,
A freestone coloured hand: I verily did thinke
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands:
She has a huswives' hand, but that's no matter:
I say she never did invent this letter,
This is a man's invention, and his hand.

There is no contradiction in "She has a *huswives'* hand" and "This is a *man's*—hand," for "man's hand" means his handwriting.

Cowden Clarke says "Mason's conjecture, that the half-line, 'Phebe did write it,' concluded 'with her own fair hand' is very plausible. Some allusion to the whiteness and delicacy of Phebe's hand seems requisite to account for Rosalind's abuse of its colour and texture; as else this abuse comes in without apparent consecution." My seven other editors pass the Folio version without comment. This neglect of an earlier commentator is to be deprecated. I am in hearty agreement with Mason and Clarke, for "her own fair hand" is exactly what one would expect from the love-lorn Silvius and it could not be bettered as forming an inducement to Rosalind to cool his fervour with a douche of disparagements.

The omission would appear to amount to a whole line. I suggest the combination should be as italicized below—

SIL. No, I protest, I know not the contents,
Phebe did write it *with her own fair hand.*
ROS. *Fair hand, forsooth*! Come, Come, you are a foole,
And turn'd into the extremity of love.

The addition of "old" to "gloves" raises Rosalind's sarcasm to the limit, so some such addition as Mason's is absolutely necessary, for without she had an adequate incentive, Shakespeare would never have allowed his fair heroine to speak so depreciatingly of Phebe's *hands*: he would have made her confine her opprobrium to Phebe's *letter.*

HOWARD PARSONS.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POETRY

The scope of this paper is the consideration of the Poetic Gift, and the manner in which it works. A favourite subject for Scholarship Essays at Oxford used to be the well-worn theme, "A poet is born, not made." The question is like one of those interminable theses which the youth of ancient Rome debated to develop their budding eloquence. And it is constantly reappearing, because there is no complete answer to it.

The poetic gift is not something that can be "achieved" or have "thrust upon" one. It is certainly a gift. But unless it is worked upon, unless it is "uncovered," as the art of Michael Angelo would "uncover" an exquisite statue "hidden", as he would say, "in a block of stone," it remains inert and unrealised. And so a poet is both born and made. But unless a man has that gift, all his labour will never produce real poetry. And as a further corollary, if a man is so gifted, once he begins to use his talent, it will manifest itself even in spite of his control. For example : Virgil is a poet of the first order, yet he used the "stilus" (blue-pencil!) unsparingly, and was for ever pruning and regrouping his work. Horace laboured incessantly, as he confesses, over his work, yet he never produced a real poem. On the other hand, Catullus, although he is a Satirist like Horace, yet fills his poems with a smouldering fire. And Lucretius, however relentlessly he confines himself to the dull theme of his didactic purpose, cannot help passages of real poetic quality, in the pathetic description, for example, of the effect of death on a united family, or in the delineation of scenery, or in the powerful presentation of the Plague at Athens.

What then is a Poet? He is one who possesses a double gift, the poetic "inspiration" or "vision," and the power of expressing it. What these are I will now briefly consider, beginning with the latter.

The power of expression may be called the medium, linking up the mind of the poet with minds outside his own: minds which have no access to the regions whither he can betake himself. There are many ways of expressing ideas other than by words. An artist, for example, uses colours, a sculptor employs stone or marble, a musician expresses himself in sound, and so on. But as every such artist, each in his own sphere, is superior to the mere teller of tales, because of the power inherent in his own particular medium of stirring human emotion, so a poet, although he deals with arrangements of words as a narrator does, yet possesses an art by which he can stir human feelings with a power which the other does not possess.*

* Someone has said, "The Poet trails an aerial able to pick up wave-lengths that are beyond the capacity of the lesser receptivity of ordinary mortals". A modern might say that the Poet wears an oxygen helmet which enables him to breathe in the ideal stratosphere.

The poet's power of expression implies obedience to certain rules, axioms, canons, which, like all true obedience, "limits only to make more free." These canons, of course, are not primitive. That is to say, the power of expression is inherent in human nature, or at any rate in certain gifted natures, and it was from a study of the works of such people that the canons were evolved; just as Grammar is posterior not prior to correct speech. But a poet obeys these rules because they give a form, a definiteness, a unity necessary for all harmony to his work, without which it would be incomplete and defective. However "picturesque" and apparently "lop-sided" a house may be, if its construction follows the canons of its own art, the effect will be not dissatisfying but pleasing. St. Thomas Aquinas, I believe, says somewhere that harmony in the sense of "unity of idea," is necessary for all true beauty. I do not however propose to pursue that discussion now. I say merely that unless a poet has power of expression in the sense indicated he will fail to establish a liaison (as the soldiers say) with outside minds. I used to know a child who had real poetic gifts and yet through her immaturity usually failed to achieve the adequate expression of her ideas. I could witness the struggle to produce an idea that was literally tormenting the mind with its beauty. But of that more anon.

Secondly I have said that a poet must have inspiration, the poetic gift. Otherwise his faultless technique may rise no higher than parody. It is often said that Calverley is one of the most disappointing of poets because, when he had real inspiration, he gave himself up merely to parody, to themes unworthy of his art. Again, the verses in "Punch" are often unimpeachable in point of form, but assuredly not poetry. The differentiation between verse and poetry lies in the quality of the inspiration.

The poet then is a "seer," a visionary, a dreamer if you will. That is to say, he has access to a region barred to his fellow men. The ordinary things of life, for him, take on new meanings, they assume new relations with one another and with human life and emotion. They have a message for him which other ears, not attuned, cannot catch. There are notes and harmonies, I believe, in classical Greek music, which our Western ears cannot record. What stirred the Greeks to passion or so wrought upon their character as to be matter for public concern and public legislation has for us no significance. So it is with the poet. He has as it were a sixth sense attuned to the finer harmonies of the Universe. The ordinary natural phenomena, which a scientist would express in dry technical phraseology, are for him alive with the vital passions of human life. They are for him images of sensitive activity, they are the external outlet of the undercurrents of human feeling, of intellectual actuation, of passion and inspiration and motive which for the most part remain unrecorded. For him the sun "sleeps" upon the hill, the storm is the acme of baffled fury, the brook "babbles" like an innocent child, the

whisper of the wind in the trees is full of unuttered significance. For him the sun does not rise, it "fires the proud tops of the eastern pines." See how in Shakespeare's hands there is a complete landscape in one line, and for him the sun never rises without a whole commentary on human life. Again (I choose familiar passages), this land is, not a mere island, but "a precious stone set in a silver sea," and the sun again does not sink, but "sits weeping in the lowly west" in token of Richard's humiliation. I have been thrilled to see a youthful mind gifted with this poetic vision just beginning to shake its wings, as it were, and feel its power with a strange restlessness and craving to be borne aloft into the bright regions it knows to be its proper element. It was of such flight that Wilfrid Blunt wrote:

> "The dove did lend me wings. I fled away
> From the loud world, which long had troubled me,
> O lightly did I flee . . ."

Well now, is this attitude true or false? The scientist scoffs at the poet as a dreamer, useless, idle, engrossed with unprofitable speculations. But the poet is emphatically not a mere visionary. What he sees, however dimly, is Truth. Not the truth of scientific formulae (which after all are not ultimate truth, but only the true recordings of things). But the truth underlying the reality of all created things. For the poet's quest is for the uncreated beauty which he sees dimly, but with an insatiable craving. He may not be conscious of what he seeks. But, hand in hand with the artist and the musician he perceives, underlying the multiplicity of natural phenomena, a unity, a purpose, a harmony, an ideal beauty of which all these things are but the partial expression. Anyone who has studied Greek philosophy will have seen there exemplified what I have been indicating. The Ionian philosophers began with a study of natural objects. But these proved mutable, insufficient. Then they were led, especially in Sicily, to penetrate deeper and seek for the underlying unity, unchangeable, uncaused. And so they became not only philosophers, but also poets, and more, mystics, with a perpetual quarrel with the cut and dried man of science.

Go back to the very beginnings of Greek poetry, the oldest we have, Homer and the Rhapsodists, you will find them, pagans as they were, yet claiming an inspiration, a divine afflatus, which lifts them above their fellow men. Why? Because they saw things as their fellows could not see them. And they believed that their power and vision came from above.

This quality of inspiration, whether conscious or unconscious, is the touchstone of true poetry as opposed merely to descriptive verse or exercises in prosody. Have I said too much? Would I exclude from poetry anything which does not treat of the Force behind the Universe? I would not. But I say that the poets of all times and every language have written true poetry because they have felt this power to penetrate the

veil of sense perception and that feeling has given them a touch which is recognisable whatever be their theme or period.

I have said that to make a poet there is required inspiration and the power of expression. I propose now to consider, in so far as it is possible, the way in which the poetic inspiration works, how it is set in motion, and how far it is under control. The human mind is a fearful and wonderful thing, and I speak with all due submission to psychological authority.

We are all conscious of the threefold internal power of Memory, Understanding and Will. There is also the imagination which reproduces images once imprinted and builds up others from past material. The poetic faculty is not something apart from these powers, not a distinct organ, but rather it is the inter-action of all these powers, acting under a special inspiration.

To illustrate my point let us take a page of Latin or Greek text. To an uneducated mind the letters effectually conceal the underlying ideas. Even to a scholar if he reads the page hastily the meaning will be unrevealed. But if he dwells upon the page, always supposing the words are known, gradually the ideas in the mind of the writer will become sharply defined, clear and real. Why? Because his memory is recalling where he saw the word before, what they meant, what possibilities of meaning they have. His will, the faculty of choice, is busy accepting or rejecting the meanings presented. And his intellect is comparing ideas and combinations of ideas to see if they fit the context. And his imagination will be supplying a whole host of pictures, visualising the images suggested and their possible application to the present passage. Of this complicated process, perhaps, he will be but dimly conscious. But the co-operation of these faculties will be engrossing and, ultimately, pleasurable. (Cf the solution of a Cross-word puzzle).

Very similar is the process by which poetry is evolved. The will selects an idea for expression: the intellect analyses it, pierces it, absorbs it, and calls upon the memory and imagination for suitable representations with which to adorn it. The only difference is that whereas in translation the two things to be reconciled in the mind are the ideas underlying the original text and the corresponding English idiom, here the two things are the ideas drawn from the poet's perception of his "other world" and a suitable rhythm and metre.

About rhythm and metre I will say something later on. Here I will only say that the poet's mind works in the same way in selecting the words and phrases he requires as it did in selecting the images and ideas he wished to express.

The poetic gift then is not so much a special faculty as the power of co-ordinating the ordinary faculties to produce the required result. But whence comes inspiration? And can it be stimulated at will? To answer both questions at once: it depends upon the receptivity of the poet's

mind at the time, its sensitiveness, its power of reaction. And so this gift, the Poet's Muse, is necessarily capricious, often rebellious, hiding when wanted and intruding unexpectedly. Doubtless you are all aware of the amusing interlude in the House when Bottomley tried to take Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate, to task for failing to write on the Cenotaph. (When Robert Bridges went to America, the reporters, who found him uncommunicative, wrote, "George's canary refuses to chirp.") The truth is that usually the necessity of producing a poem to order kills inspiration. I say usually because Tennyson is a brilliant exception. But probably the explanation is that the mind of Tennyson was in tune with the events he was called upon to commemorate, and for him it was no hardship.

Inspiration then should be spontaneous. And it will react spontaneously to external stimulus. But the stimulus must be self-chosen. Thus a poet will be staying with some friends, and his desire to please, or an accident, or an incident of every day, or some special circumstance of his surroundings will suggest to his mind some idea which demands expression. Or again an idea born of some memory emerges from the hidden realm of the sub-consciousness and compels, with a kind of feverish insistence, its due development. It is a strange but irresistible impulse. It seizes one unexpectedly, perhaps when in motion or in conversation, and gives one no peace till its wants are satisfied. You will remember how Francis Thompson used to scribble all over the covers of his pupils' copy-books, and earn a rebuke for so doing. (I always fancy he did it during class time!) He could not help himself. It is strange how the other faculties of the body watch fascinated but helpless to assist except by inaction, whilst the mind, with a subtle intoxicating pleasure, is clothing with appropriate versification the idea that torments it with its force and beauty. There is felt a curious pleasure, distinct from, though combined with, the ordinary joy of production such as even a child feels making castles of the sand. It is a pleasure that arises from the perfect harmony of the interior faculties united in a creative act, and is a perpetual tribute to the unrealised capacity of the human mind.

One more theory and I have done. I have long been convinced that there is a distinct connection between a sense of rhythm and the circulation of the blood. A doctor feels a patient's pulse to see if the blood is functioning properly. If it is, there is a steady rhythmical beat. I believe that our sense of rhythm, that is of motion with a regularly recurring beat is at least intensified by the perpetual rhythm of our own physiological make-up.

The influence of blood on character is so universally accepted that we speak unhesitatingly in terms of blood in describing, for example, good birth and breeding, and that not only of animals but of persons also. Again, the quality of the blood, partially at any rate, determines national character. The Italians, for example, are fierce lovers and haters, quickly

aroused but soon appeased, fiery, generous, impressionable, impulsive, quick-witted, clever inventors, easily inspired, swift to song and to laughter, fond of bright colours. Why? Because their blood is warmed by a southern sun. The difference of character seen in northern nations, for better or worse, is likewise due, at least largely, to the different quality of their blood. This difference we also feel in ourselves at different times. It is not a question of nerves merely. Once our "blood is up" as we say, the same nerves that just now seemed all of a jangle are vivified into perfect and acutely efficient harmony.

Similarly a poet is stirred into different moods, and expresses himself by a different metre according to the present quality of his blood, its activity or inertness. His mood, or mode, is therefore swift, eager, vigorous, or mournful and sad and heavy, or tender and full of pathos according to the swiftness or slowness of his own pulsating blood. Not that his blood is the source of his inspiration, at least not usually: although I have observed from experience that ideas come unbidden or refuse to come when called according to physical condition. But I would say that the form, the rhythm in which a poet expresses himself is in some mysterious way connected with the vigour or the languor of the life that pulsates in his veins. The practical test of this theory, the application of it to Tragedy and Comedy, to Nature poems of lyric beauty, to stately Elegy, to the swinging poems of the sea and the incoherent poems of the war, your readers may make from their own past and future experience.

T. A. Agius.

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE CENTENARY

1847—1947

The centenary of Henry Francis Lyte, author of "Abide with me" and other well-known hymns was observed during November. A Centenary Exhibition containing many exhibits of great interest, including the original MS., of "Abide with me" was opened at the beginning of the month at Marylebone Public Library.

A memorial tablet was unveiled at Westminster Abbey on November 16th, and other special services at which Lyte's hymns were sung were held throughout the world.

On Thursday November 20th, the actual centenary of the poet's death, Lyte's hymn "Praise my Soul the King of Heaven" was sung at the wedding of H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth.

H.B.T.

PLATO AND POETRY

"And truly, even Plato, whosoever well considereth,[1] shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most of poetry . . ." So declares Sir Philip Sidney in his Apologie. Little need be said to justify this statement. The dramatic, dialogue form of plato's writings; his rich imagery; his infallible selection of just the right word to convey the finest shade of meaning; the smooth, untroubled progress of most of his prose: all these introduce us to a literary artist of exquisite taste and touch, a sculptor of letters as well as of ideas.

In the Apologie Sidney is concerned with proving a point, namely that poetry is the noblest of all the sciences. And it must be said that at times he is not averse to running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. He is ready to seize upon the smallest shred of evidence which may support his claim. Plato's severe criticism of poetry would seem at first to alienate the greatest of classical philosophers from Sidney's cause. But the cultured Elizabethan diplomatist believes that Plato does in fact support his theory of poetry, and he alternately badgers, praises, and abuses the philosopher into acquiescence. Plato condemned only the abuse of poetry, he maintains.[2] Even Socrates was said to have passed some of his later years in putting Aesop's fables into verse. Full evil should it become his scholar Plato to put such words in his master's mouth against poets. And from what commonwealth would Plato banish poetry?[3]—from one where women are held in common. Similarly, Sir Philip the Puritan has strong views on the Phaedrus[4] and Symposium, enquiring whether any poet would authorize such abominations as are therein mentioned.

But one cannot help feeling that Sidney has not put his whole heart into these attempts to tar Plato with his own brush. Indeed, he himself condemns requiting objections made against poets with like cavillations against philosophers. His comments on Plato's philosophy of poetry are far more constructive. Plato criticised the poets of his day because they lent their[5] support to wrong opinions of the gods—"making light tales of that unspotted essence", in Sidney's fine phrase. All stories of fightings and plottings amongst the gods are to be forbidden. Poets are not to teach that God is the author of evil as well as of good, nor that he is capable of falsehood. Moreover, God does not assume various shapes and guises, as some poets imply. Since the divine nature is perfect and not lacking in any excellence or beauty, any change could only be from the perfect state to the imperfect. Therefore let none of the poets tell us that

> "Like such poor stranger pilgrims do the gods,
> All shapes assuming, glide through towns and towers".

To twentieth century society, which is not conspicuous for its interest in theological matters, Plato's concern for pure religion and undefiled may seem rather misplaced. But viewed in his context Plato was an Athenian Calvin, and indeed something of a religious bolshevik. Homer occupied a place in Greek life and thought rather akin to that of the Bible in nineteenth century England. And like H. G. Wells, Plato dared to criticise. True, it was in a very different spirit, and he did so with some reluctance. "It must be[6] uttered, though a certain love and reverence for Homer which I have had from my childhood would forbid my speaking. For surely of all those noble tragic poets he is the master and leader. Still I must not honour a man more than I honour truth, but must utter what I have to say".

Plato considers the poets intemperate in their teaching on the emotions. In the Laws[7] he refers to the choirs which, at a religious sacrifice, "drown the solemn ceremony with sheer blasphemy, harrowing the feelings of their audience with their rhythms, language, and lugubrious strains". Not only do the poets impart wrong theology, but they throw people into emotional states. We must get rid of all such phrases as "wailing Cocytus", "loathed Styx", and "sapless dead",[8] the very sound of which, as Plato remarks, is enough to make men shiver. Death must not be painted as something to be feared, and Hades should not be abused but rather praised. We must also strike out the weepings and wailings of famous men, and give them instead to bad women and cowardly men. Inordinate grief and excessive laughter are alike to be condemned. The latter is unseemly, and almost always followed by an equally violent reaction. A high value must be placed upon truth—ancient Greece was not, perhaps, remarkable in its laxity here. Temperance in other directions is to be fostered by the poets: they are to be careful what they sing about wine and women. Such things as are implied in the line

"Thou ever steeped in wine, dog's face, with heart but of a hart"

are to be rigorously excluded. Heroes and great men are never to be associated with any unworthy thoughts, words, or works in poetry. Achilles is to have no moral heel. Fifth century Athens, like twentieth century Hollywood, was rather given to extravagant emotional displays. In art the emotion of the moment is allowed to delude us, and Plato feels that it is the wilder type of emotion that is best adapted to poetic treatment.

"Rhythm and harmony enter most powerfully[9] into the inmost part of the soul and lay forcible hands upon it, bearing grace with them, so making graceful him who is rightly trained, and him who is not, the reverse". Plato is fully aware of the dangers of imitation, and proceeds to[10] banish imitative poetry—tragedy and comedy—from his commonwealth. Imitation is permitted to the young, for then the mind is tender, and easily moulded, and impressions are[11] more readily received. The young mind is not developed fully enough to appreciate the Good through the

faculty of reason. The objects of imitation must, of course, be very carefully selected—hence Plato's severe criticism of the subject-matter of poetry. But education should lead men forth from mere imitation to insight and understanding. Drama appeals to men's passions and emotions, and leads them away from reality. Moreover, it is never true to life. For a situation to have a dramatic effect upon us certain aspects of it, and the importance of the situation as a whole, must be exaggerated. We do not go storming through life like characters in a play. The problem of what might be called amateur imitation is still an important one in our own day. It is interesting to notice the number of protests against certain wireless features for children, on the grounds that they are responsible for the increase in juvenile crime. And the effect of cinemas on shop-girls, and others, need not be enlarged upon. So, decides[12] Plato, when the tragic poets seek permission to perform their compositions we shall tell them that we ourselves are authors of a tragedy, and that the finest and best we know how to make. For the whole policy of the ideal commonwealth has been to dramatize the noble and perfect life. Those who do this are the greatest poets, the greatest actors, and the greatest artists. This passage in the Laws is perhaps one of the earliest pleas for creative living.

Through all Platonic thought there runs the idea that art and poetry belong to the world of opinion as opposed to knowledge, the world of shadows as opposed to reality. In the Cave Allegory[13], for example, Plato depicts the prisoners in their dark cell as being concerned only with illusions and images. They mistake the shadows for the reality. They live in the world of imagination. It is only when they escape from the flickering firelight on the walls of the cave that they encounter truth in all its blinding abstraction. Again, in the analogy of the divided line, wherein Plato draws a diagram of his philosophy of education[14] the lowest possible stage is that of the imagination. The first segment of the line represents the supreme degree of superficiality—the region of shadows and images. Plato has not only physical images in mind, but also those of art. There are many trials and tribulations to be undergone before the realm of Forms is reached. Here symbols are dispensed with, and reality is presented as one, to be apprehended by dialectic.

In the Laws Plato[15] speaks of the poems to he used in the preliminary stages of education as "spells for souls". They are to lead and draw the young mind on towards understanding of the truth—and, as he remarks[16], poets are not quite the best judges of good and evil. He sets up rightness as[17] opposed to pleasure as the yardstick of art. In short he criticises art by the standards of morality. If a poet doesn't tell the truth, then he is a bad poet. Plato, like George Fox, is aware of the power of words, and the danger that people will feed each other with rhetoric. Imitation is to be carefully limited, and nothing unlovely is to be copied. It is possible, too, that people may[18] take the artist's impression for the reality, and believe that art is an adequate substitute for life. Plato thinks that art stimulates

our lower impulses. Poetry is too sensuous: appetites and desires are not evil, but simply illusory and worthless. Moreover, he places contemplation of such sensuous things on the same[19] level as the things themselves. And it is only in contemplation of the universal Forms that truth is to be found. Plato was concerned with understanding poetry, not appreciating it. Art is really a revelation of truth through insight, followed by emotion. The question as to whether or not one agrees with what the poet has to say does not enter into any artistic criticism of his work. Art is not real life, but it is real and it is life. Again, the artist, as Plato realised, is not living normally in moments of creation. "The poet is a light and winged and holy thing,[20] and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired, and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him". In other words when he is no longer a reasonable creature. But this inspiration is not direct—any more than is artistic imitation. Plato compares inspiration to a chain of iron rings suspended from a magnet. The Muse inspires Homer: Homer inspires the rhapsode: the rhapsode may inspire other men: and so on.

It is clear that in some sense Plato regarded the arts as a vehicle of social reform. If we purge the arts of their deceits, he says, we shall educate a new generation of men who do not bear within them the lie in the soul. To a certain extent the message of Picasso, for example, is Platonic in intention. The very fact that an eminent professor of art pronounces him "diabolical", that country parsons and rural deans feel constrained to write exhaustive letters to *The Times* condemning him as "immoral", that cheap cartoonists and the popular press find in his exhibition a virgin fount of inspiration, that people are prepared to extend their queueing activities to an art gallery—all this shows that art may still be used to stir up social activity, to make people think and feel. Picasso preserves on his chaotic canvasses the visual reactions of an artist to the disintegration of moral standards, the disruption of civilisation, the collapse of culture—in short, to yet another world war. He is studiedly hideous, full of discords, inversions, absurdities—but so is the twentieth century. In his art he has captured something of the cacophony of war, and perhaps something of its strange, frightening beauty too. But he is teaching, preaching—he has the grandeur of an Old Testament prophet. He is inciting the world to dream dreams and see visions. It is unlikely that Plato would appreciate his art, but he would probably have understood it.

But the question remains, did Plato banish poetry from his ideal state? There is little doubt about the fate of imitative poetry.[21] But the pains he expends upon the criticism of poetry in the Republic, and his isolation of certain acceptable forms, seem to suggest that he did not banish the poet lock, stock, and barrel. The indulgences granted to poets in the Laws imply that he has not underestimated their value. But it is clear that poetry in the ideal commonwealth, as in Russia, is to be nationalised. It is to be state poetry, rigorously controlled and censored.[22] "No poet shall compose anything in contravention of the public standards of law and

right, honour and good, nor shall he be at liberty to display any composition to any private citizen whatsoever until he has first submitted it to the appointed censors of such matters . . ." The Muses are to become civil servants. Panegyrics are to be composed at public sports.[23] But the composition of such verses shall not be for everyone. The author must in the first place have reached the age of fifty, and he must not be a professional or accomplished poet. The verse of composers who are in their own persons men of worth, held in public honour as authors of noble deeds, may be sung even though it have no real musical quality. The selection of poets shall be in the hands of the Minister of Education and the Curators of Law. "The gods may be properly addressed in hymns and strains[24] of mingled praise and petition. Under them spirits and heroes may similarly receive the prayers and praises appropriate to them". "In the same fashion a true lawgiver likewise[25] will persuade, or if persuasion fails, will compel, the man of poetic gifts to compose as he ought, to employ his noble and fine-filled phrases to represent by their rhythms the bearing, and by their melodies the strains, of men who are pure, valiant, and, in a word, good". The privilege of writing comedy is to be granted only to certain persons[26] Authors, again under strict oversight, are permitted to write satires—dispassionately and in jest, but not in earnest or with angry feeling. An official state anthology of permissible verse and prose is to be gathered together. Schoolmasters are to be[27] compelled to learn and appreciate this material, and those who demur are not to be employed. The compilers of this anthology are to be verging upon forty,[28] and older, and they are to be allowed "that sacrament and pastime of advancing years"—the wine-bottle. Their natural tendency would be to make the anthology too "elderly". They are less likely to commit this fault if they come to their work mellowed by a bottle of generous wine.

But Sir Philip at least is satisfied. "So as Plato, banishing the abuse,[29] not the thing, not banishing it, but giving due honour unto it, shall be our patron and not our adversary . . . whom, the wiser a man is, the more just cause shall he find to have in admiration".

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RAYMOND GARLICK.

THOMAS HARDY AS A POET

A number of living poets, notably Siegfried Sassoon, Cecil Day Lewis and Henry Reed, have told us of their admiration for, and indebtedness to Thomas Hardy, the poet; yet, in comparison with his novels, his verse has never been widely read. This is all the more remarkable when we bear in mind that the great majority of his poems are, in the best sense of the word, "popular": that is to say, they deal with everyday people, themes and situations in a straightforward, unequivocal manner.

As is well known, Hardy was already a man old in years when, disheartened by the hostile reception accorded his novel "Jude the Obscure" —on account of its "unsavoury" subject matter—he turned once more to his early love, poetry. But the miracle is that what he proceeded to write was lit from within by the untrammeled vision of a young man on the threshold of life. If we couple this truly astonishing capacity with his mature and manifold experience of living, we come nearer to explaining the unique quality of the verse that rendered vocal this man's Indian Summer—if not its lack of popular appeal.

Thomas Hardy is a novelist and a poet of place, always relating his thoughts and the activities of his characters to their background, his beloved Wessex. At the same time, his interest in and obsession by the cosmic, which activates his novels and is the motive force of "The Dynasts", keeps breaking into his poems. Hardy's innate honesty and straightforwardness, his freedom from cant, speak to us from the bulk of his writings. This integrity—to judge by contemporary opinion—must have surrounded the ageing poet like an aura, drawing all who were fortunate enough to count among his friends as toward the warm glow of a genial fire, awaking their love and their respect. One cannot imagine this man being petty or spiteful, ever suspect him of dissembling or pretence.

All the same, he was possessed of a keen, if somewhat bitter, sense of humour. Such poems as, shall we say, "In the Cemetery" and "In the Nuptial Chamber" (Satires of Circumstance) or the entertaining "A Refusal"—perhaps a sly dig at those who attacked his novels on the grounds of "immorality"—show that he is no mean satirist; while a certain sardonic streak betrays itself in others, like "The Levelled Churchyard" and "The Ruined Maid." In the latter, it will be remembered, a no-longer-innocent maid extols the advantages of being "ruined" to her still innocent country friend.

The note of strangeness and eerieness which so often creeps into Hardy's poems suggest that the older poet may have served as mentor to Walter de la Mare. "The Dream is—Which?" (Late Lyrics and Earlier) has a distinct de la Mare-ish flavour, both in subject matter and treatment. Then there is the innocent mockery of "In the days of Crinoline," in which the

young wife of the vicar sallies forth in a modest tilt-bonnet, but with an ostrich-feathered hat concealed under her crinoline, and the final stanza of which (describing her return at eventide to her husband) runs as follows:

"Today," he said, "you have shown good sense,
A dress so modest and so meek
Should always deck your goings hence
Alone," and as a recompense
He kissed her on the cheek.

—which, too, I would suggest, anticipates Mr. de la Mare in his lighter vein.

An almost Rilkean pleasure in the as yet unattained, with its complement of fear in its attainment, is suggested by such poems as "Her Confession" and "The Minute before Meeting" (More Love Lyrics). Coupled with this is what we might term the accident-of-time-and-place motif, seen at its best in such poems as "Shelley's Skylark" and "At Lulworth Cove a Century Back," which I shall return to later. The idea of events rendered important by association is also well brought out in "At the Pyramid of Cestius," which all who have been to the Protestant Cemetery in Rome will readily associate with Shelley and Keats.

The concept of a rather sardonic Motivator of human destiny, whose effects are scarcely distinguishable from those resulting from the caprices of sheer chance, lead, with Hardy, to a feeling of frustration which tends to tip over into a sense of futility (vide *God-forgotten*, *By the Earth's Corpse, New Year's Eve* and many more poems). It is this cathartic scepticism which has earned Hardy the label of "Pessimist," even by persons to whom his work is known merely by hearsay. But it is no more just a negative quality in Hardy than it is in Leopardi; it is the price a poet has to pay for putting argument before wish-thinking. At the same time Hardy is well aware of the heart-searching, the grief and despair which are so often the legacy of our capacity for reasoning. Indeed, "Freed the fret of thinking," with its lines:

Loosed from wings of reason,
We might blow like flowers,

teaches this very lesson.

Against the accusation of pessimism Hardy defends himself ably in an "Apology" prefacing *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922): "What is today," he writes, "in allusions to the present author's pages, alleged to be 'pessimism' is, in truth, only such 'questionings' "—he refers here to certain remarks of Heine—" . . . . in the exploration of reality and is the first step towards the soul's betterment, and the body's also." He goes on to advocate that " . . . pain to all upon (this globe), tongued or dumb, shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness . . ."—that trait which even we who never met him feel to have been so operative in him.

A facet of the poet's loving-kindness—in this case towards the dumb—

shows in his love of, and compassion for animals, which shines forth brightly in a number of his verses. We may instance *Compassion*, *Last words to a dumb friend*—in which he mourns the death of a pet cat—and "The Milestone by the Rabbit-burrow," where we look at the world through the eyes of timid and often bewildered creatures of the fields and woods, as Ralph Hodgson makes us do.

Personal relationships loom large in Hardy's poetry, but he generally manages to avoid the commonplace or trivial by his unusual angle of approach, and his sense of the dignity—albeit the pathetic dignity—of human existence. Incompatibility in marriage, the sex triangle and unfaithfulness in deed or thought recur, but are treated with decorum. Occasionally, however, the domestic element is too banal for even Hardy's poetic gift to illumine and transfigure.

Hardy was an experimentalist who made use of a variety of verse forms and contrasting metres, within the framework of which he nearly always managed to preserve that subtle sense of rhythm and feeling for prosody that goes to the making of "live" verse. Modern verse forms owe more to this man's pioneering than is generally recognised, and he was one of the first to free English poetry from the more rigid conventions.

Echoes of Hopkins' sprung rhythm and of his unnatural coupling of words are to be found from time to time, for instance in *The Temporary All* (Wessex Poems) and *The Mother mourns* (Miscellaneous Poems), wherein the following line occurs:

"Cheeks that were fair in their flush-time."

At other times Hardy coins somewhat odd and bastard words, the choice of which seems frequently to be governed by the need for a rhyme. Thus, though a word like "claytime," say, is acceptable within its context, elsewhere we come across "varwardly" and, where rhymes are required such infelicities as "tristfulness" and "wistlessness."

Hardy rises to great heights in such poems as *As at Lulworth Cove a Century Back, In St. Paul's a while ago,* "An Ancient to Ancients" and *In the Evening*. In the first-named the association-of-time-and-place theme recurs, but the writing, whilst employing all Hardy's accustomed economy of words, is inspired and masterly. The poem describes how the poet himself, had he seen the unrecognised figure of Keats on the foreshore, would, by force of circumstance, have shown complete indifference towards one who in the light of later knowledge proves to be deserving of the utmost reverence from all men. He is able, too, to evoke atmosphere in a few short lines:

She answered not, lying listlessly
With her dark dry eyes on the coppery sea,
That now and then
Flung its lazy flounce at the neighbouring quay.

Or, in a somewhat different vein:

At whiles would flit
Swart bats, whose wings, be-webbed and tanned,
Whined like the wheels of ancient clocks.

Every now and then, too, one encounters, with a pleasurable thrill, such apt metaphors as "fire-gnawed logs" and "the foam-fingered sea," and such pleasant conceits as "at gnat and cobweb time." The opening stanza of *On the Esplanade* (Human Shows, *etc.*), again, is as near perfect in its evocation of scene as it well could be, but—and this is a noticeable fault in a number of Hardy's poems *The Harbour Bridge* is another instance)—there seems to be a falling-off in later stanzas: as if the first kindle of inspiration had died before the end.

In *A Drizzling Easter Morning* such lines as:

I stand amid them in the rain,
While blusters vex the yew and vane;

remind one forcibly of A. E. Housman. Hardy's verses have perhaps not the exquisite finish, that almost too perfect elegance of the enigmatic Professor's, but—oh, how much more human is he! The tenderer side of that humanity is well illustrated in poems like *Outside the Casement* in which, it will be remembered, two people (presumably the parents) shrink from telling a young girl the bad tidings which they have just received: a note which Housman could never have struck. Here and there Hardy's verse shows traces of the mannered style of his impetuous contemporary, Meredith, but it never becomes as convoluted, and certainly never so obscure as much of the latter's. Robert Bridges' *London Snow*, which has, in its time, received exaggerated praise, is paralleled by Hardy's delightful *Snow in the Suburbs*. Some of us, indeed, may prefer the homely touches—such as the sparrow's surprise snowbath—of Hardy's little poem to the other's measured sweep.

Time ringing the changes, the ineluctable progression from the cradle to the grave; in short, mortality—this motif is ever present in Hardy's writings. Poem after poem is tinged with regret for things past, for beauty faded, and for the lost joys of youth. The bearded ancient with the hour-glass and the scythe is forever looking over the shoulder of the elderly man who is Hardy the poet,

—But it's not the selfsame bird—
No: perished to dust is he . . .
As also are those who heard
That song with me.

Hardy's feet were always planted firmly on the ground, even when, like all true poets, his eyes were on the stars. He wrote of flesh-and-blood people, possessed of smouldering passions which were liable to burst into flame, whether in manor-house or cottage, or on the lonely heath under a baleful moon. There is much that is nostalgic, resigned generally, occasionally indignant, but his sentiments are never mawkish, his lines never mere rhetoric. Many of his verses are airy trifles, others mere

epigrams or passing comments, but there is a rich vein of gold in the Wessex ore.

At this date one cannot but wonder what the poet who (parenting his words in this instance on the moon) allowed himself the following comment on life:

"I . . . often think of it
As a show
God surely ought to shut up soon,"

would have felt had he lived in our time: in this perilous, post-Hitler era, when a political war of nerves is thrown into relief by a devilish array of potential devices of war, and the atomic threat hangs like a vast Sword of Damocles over all mankind. To quote a recurring line from one of Hardy's own poems: "What of the world now?"

ERIC PETERS.

DAPHNE

From what remote Italian ancestress
Do you derive your enigmatic eyes,
Your heart-shaped face of cameo perfectness;
That slender torso swelling to the thighs,
Those maiden breasts and plump well-rounded arms,
Such taper-fingered hands? And to complete
This catalogue of cinquecento charms,
Those smooth strong legs and short broad shapely feet?
When first I saw you, scant-swim-suited, tanned,
I was reminded irresistibly
Of Aphrodite rising from the sea
As limned by Botticelli's master hand;
Or sleep-flushed dryads, waking on a lawn
In the clear light of the Renaissance dawn.

And sometimes, too, the poet's eye can trace—
As airmen trace lost town-sites after rain—
Latent within the structure of your face
A fleeting look, that comes and goes again,
Of yet an earlier ancestral stamp;
The proud, the classic profile that one sees
On ancient coins ploughed up at Caesar's Camp
Or carved in some Augustan temple frieze.
Strange how the Latin strain persists in you!
Even the vivid blueness of your eyes
Reflects the turquoise of Tyrrhenian skies
And not our colder, paler English hue;
And when you smile and call my name, I know
Why Lalage charmed Horace, long ago. JOHN BLANFORD.

FLIGHT TO NEWARA ELIYA

High and low I flee you. Such was your will.
From the parched city to the chill
Cloud-sodden highlands, restlessly I seek
Forgetfulness. But wheresoe'er
I halt for breath,
Some memory assails me there—
Some glancing likeness of your walk;
Some gesture, catching the quick grace
Of yours; some light as lights your face
When you talk
(And oh, that I might listen when you talk,
Might watch your lips move in deliberate chase
Of thoughts which flash that light across your face!)
Some silence, woven in the strands
Of silences once eloquent with you;
Some hint of the desired, eternally
Denied touch of your mouth, your hands,
Breathed in this warm wind's kiss,
Borne in that other's cool caress
Upon my cheek.

Can you conceive what phantomed, taunting death
The life is you would drive me to?
Have you no gentler banishment than this?

I will give up seeking forgetfulness;
I will acknowledge you where'er you are—
And you are everywhere.

To be aware
Of living texture in the flame—
The white and red and yellow flame—
Of flowers; of the blue
Beyond the dark behind a star;
Of lilac quiet 'neath the blustering green
Wave summits; of the sudden scent between
Shower and slaking
Of sun's brass thirst from jungle reek—to be
Aware of these
Is to be vividly aware of you:
Mind sets no boundaries
T'wixt these

And you
And me.

Music on verge of soundlessness—far, clear
Flute of a bird;
The secret liturgy of trees;
Tree-rat and gekko making
With crickets tiny, hidden harmonies—
Unnoticed, had not you
Quickened my ear,
So lifting me from that mute limbo where
I wait for word from you, and wait,
And wait,
And get no word,
No word at all.

I panted to a waterfall
Which, from a cloud-wrapped mountain, straight
Plunged to a pool beset with boulders.
Winds gathered the spray of it like a veil
About its ever-falling
Never-falling
Form;
A woman's form—
Like yours, a woman's form;
I'll swear 'twas woman's form—
Turned to the wall
Of jet, gleam-spattered rock, a robe of spray
Shuddering about her shrugging shoulders.

I could not see her features, but I knew
She was the mountain's goddess, turning her
Contemptuous back on things that were
In contemplation of what ought to be.
And in her thunderous whisper she decreed
The monstrous truth of her more monstrous lie
(Nor yet, unlike the God of Sinai,
Cared she one jot
If man gave heed
Or not)—
Duty
Was Beauty;
'Twas enough
That loveliness be wholly iron stuff.

The pool
Bubbling to foamy brim
Where half a universe of sky
Each moment had
Its dizzy ecstasy
Within the pulsing water's rim
Then instantly
Shivered to a myriad
Splinters and drowned;
The convocation of great ferns around
The dripping boulders stooping,
Swaying,
Drooping
Their croziers of sappy filigree;
And in and out of crannies lavender-
Belled creepers straying;
And silver shafts which shone
And swifted
Over, under, through the rifted
Clouds to the mountain side—these were
But fripparies to turn the back upon.
And not a glance, nor thought, nor care had she
For me.
And she
Was you.

You, my belov'd unloving She
Who gaze but on the things you think should be,
There in the black, unbreathing tracts
Of logic separate from facts.

You were the wise one, I the fool
(Yet wiser in my foolishness than you)
Because
I only knew the Thing that was.

I only knew that when you spoke
Those last, indifferent words to me
Some inward part
('Twas very like my heart)
Trembled—and broke.

D. C. Bray.

THE BACKGROUND OF "A SHROPSHIRE LAD"

Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die . . . is a purely pagan concept. It is, nevertheless, the burden of nearly all Housman's poems, and especially of the sequence *A Shropshire Lad.* A mixture of classical precision and pagan rusticity, the *Lad* has more than a little in common with Fitzgerald's translation of *Omar Khayyam.* It also has affinities with Horace and Virgil, of course; but the resemblance to *Omar* is, I think, the deeper one: not less so, because of their mutual apprehension of Time as synonymous with the decay of youth, with personal death and subsequent oblivion, and the similarity of their sovereign remedies, Love and Wine.

Analysing the thought-content behind the obvious symbolism of the *Lad,* we find that Housman's actual thematic material is limited in the extreme. Confined, in fact, to the following:

Youth—Beer—Love—Sport
Nature—Shropshire—Nostalgia
Suicide—War—Murder—Death.

These particular concepts, in all possible combinations and formulas, constitute the thought-content in (or at the basis of) all Housman's poetry. But that is not to imply that they were Professor Housman's *personal* equipment. One must, it seems, be careful to dissociate the implications of *A Shropshire Lad* from Professor Housman personally. The *Lad* himself is a myth, and he has all the necessary attributes of the myth, simplicity, passionate sincerity, one-ness and completeness, and a restricted range of emotions. For as there are poets whose creations are but narcissistic reflections of themselves, so there are poets whose creations form a part of a deliberate and carefully defined mythology. It is to the latter category that Housman belongs. His thematic material is restricted, but not unconsciously, not vaguely, or unsystematically. The restriction is not one of accident, but of careful discrimination. He has obviously preferred to use a subject-matter which has been proven consistent with poetic expression. And the result—as Housman probably foresaw—is that his poetry is not only popular in itself, but has provided excellent lyrical material for a song-cycle that is peculiarly English, and—a singular achievement for an eminent scholar—perfectly natural.

It may be as well at this point to take few of the *Shropshire Lad* poems and try to see beyond the subtle perfection of the completed work: to assess the broader implications which occasioned (and conditioned) it. Here, as example, is that beautiful lyric of rustic courtship and disappointment (frustration is a frequent device in Housman's love-lyrics) which is expressed within a framework of country lore and a variant on the old folksong question-and-answer formula.

Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
  Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours

That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads
And pick you posies gay?
—'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
"You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
'Tis now the blood runs gold,
And maid and man had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower tomorrow,
But never as good as new.
—Suppose I wound my arm right round—
" 'Tis true, young man, 'tis true."

What is being said is not at all profound or original or even subtle. But it is being said in such a way, and with such a delicacy of decoration, that the poem itself is memorable. Here, in another example, is Housman's expression of the nostalgic regret-for-long-lost-youth-and-home, crystallised into a few phrases of exceptional beauty . . . and exactitude:

XL.

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

That is the complete poem. And, one may add, the complete thought. There are no loose ends, no vague allusions, no suggestion of mysterious profundity. Indeed, it is only Housman's perfect handling that puts the poem above a charge of sentimentality. In the hands of a lesser poet, the same material would appear shallow and inane.

Here, again, in a different metre, is the same theme, still beautifully handled; not so much dependent on the thought-basis as on *this particular* embodiment in phrase and imagery.

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

Yet, apart from such themes as are the inheritance of every age, Housman uses one which may seem rather incongruous with his own nature. That is, the theme of physical violence; or perhaps one should say, the *result* of violence. And not so much violence as a casual projection of youth, an end in itself as an easy exit to melancholia, or the manifest result of a quarrel.

> . . . The sun burns on the half-mown hill,
> By now the blood is dried;
> And Maurice amongst the hay lies still
> And my knife is in his side.

In this, perhaps more than in anything, Housman stands apart from both the "Greek Anthologists" and the Oriental paganism of *Omar Khayyam*. The final solution, says the *Lad* in effect, is in the gun . . .

> Shot? so quick, so clean an ending?
> Oh that was right, lad, that was brave:
> Yours was not an ill for mending
> 'Twas best to take it to the grave.

It would not, however, be fair to condemn Housman on that account; for he did bring back vigour and speed and violence to a medium that was then in need of them. And even apart from that, *A Shropshire Lad* initiated a whole new public to the realm of poetry. For the *Lad*, as indeed *Omar Khayyam*, *because* of their restriction to those facets of experience which are undoubtedly universal, and *because* of their readily discernible rhyme and rhythm-schemes, had an interest for everyone. Everyone can appreciate the feeling of a boy's first and hopeless love for a girl. Everyone can appreciate the symbolism of the "Sands of Time," of vanishing youth and enforced estrangement from home. For all his technical mastery of poetic formulas and his academic background at Cambridge, Professor Housman was never esoteric. On the contrary, his phraseology is exact, lucid, perfect: symbolic without being esoteric, suggestive and evocative without ever being vague. Indeed, the absence of thoughtful humanism is something to be wondered at, as when Housman (through the *Lad*) remarks:

> Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:
> Why should men make haste to die?
> Empty heads and tongues a-talking
> Make the rough road easy walking,
> And the feather pate of folly
> Bears the falling sky.

Lord David Cecil has remarked that a pervading pessimism is at the root of all Housman's verse, and that, together with Fitzgerald, he is, "for all his perfection," a minor poet. Perfection Housman certainly attains, though within such rigidly defined limits as few poets would care to observe. Possibly the psychologists would label the *Lad* a "compensation," into which Housman projected all the attributes which he himself had lacked or foregone. At any rate, there are times (as in the last-quoted stanza, XLIX) when the poet would almost seem to be talking to himself, reassuring himself, or simply playing with fantasies of might-have-been. Reading the poetry quietly, to oneself, one can hypothesise the *Lad* as Housman's other self; the self which, when he was bottled-up in his study at Cambridge, or all but absorbed in the world of books, revolted against its imprisonment . . . taking the scholar's imagination back with it, to those Shropshire hills, those rose-lipt girls and lightfoot lads, whom once he had known, and loved, and left behind.

LEWIS WILSHIRE.

ARNHEM

We are weaving a coverlet—we who remember—
As soft as the light of the dawn in September;
As fragile as clouds in the heaven above,
Though its threads are as strong as our durable love.
It is woven of music, whose delicate sound
Will muffle your ears to the tumult around.
In texture—translucent as pearls on a string
With the deep hues of Autumn, the clear hues of Spring.
Its scent is the breath of the fields and the clover;
It closely enfolds as the arms of the lover;
Is endless as friendship, and silver as Light
With the hopes of the daytime—the tears of the night;
And, warm with the heartbeats that doom cannot sever,
This mantle of peace shall enfold you for ever.

IRENE BRENT.

LOW TIDE

The tide withdraws within my soul
And leaves upon that troubled shore
Such strange sea-wrack of memory,
Such curios scarce known before,
That I would scan them ere the roll
Of waves returning hides once more
This flotsam of my history. . . .

I pace among familiar spars
That once mine own proud vessel crowned,
And rode the storm of young desires;
For I have sailed the wide world round,
Steering my course by ancient stars
Until I ran the ship aground
On doomed Atlantis' sunken spires.

Amongst the seaweed dankly spread
Are treasured, long-forgotten toys,
Chalice and coin, wand and sword,
The tawdry glint of tarnished joys,
Mementoes of the dear, the dead,
Of golden girls, heroic boys,
Echoes of song and holy word.

The sad, salt-sodden forms, the wide
Encircling sandhills and the foam
Whose patterns arabesque the strand
Are pale beneath the rising dome
Of an enormous moon; the tide
Begins its long slow journey home
Towards the bosom of the land.

Return, O Sea! The hour's not yet
For classifying, heart unmoved,
The wreckage of illusion;
So many dreams are still unproved,
Such veils of longing and regret
Have dulled the images I loved—
Come, waters of oblivion!

DIANA M. MOORE.

OUR OWN ANTHOLOGY

The Winning Hundred Poems

The response to the appeal on page 140 of the March-April issue was disappointing, and not nearly as many lists as were expected have been received by the final date for considering them. Nevertheless, the list sent in may claim to represent a fair cross section, not only of the Society, but of lovers of English poetry, and lists were received from all over the world.

My method of choosing your 100 favourite poems was to analyse each list under the various poets, adding a tick to each poem already mentioned, or adding the name of a new poem if it had not been mentioned before. In the result, all poems receiving 7 marks were definitely in the list, leaving 14 places to be filled from the 30 or 40 poems which received 6 marks. In order to fill the remaining places, I gave my own vote to my 14 favourite poems among the candidates for final selection and, in that way, made up the 100. This, however, was the sum total of my "editing," and the results thus obtained are as follows:

Marks—27: Ode to a Nightingale (Keats). Ode to the West Wind (Shelley). 24: Upon Westminster Bridge (Wordsworth). 23: Elegy in a Country Church-Yard (Gray). 21: To Autumn (Keats). The Donkey (Chesterton). 19: The Soldier (Brooke). Ode on a Grecian Urn (Keats).

18: The Old Vicarage, Grantchester (Brooke). Kubla Khan (Coleridge). The Listeners (De la Mare). On First looking into Chapman's Homer (Keats). On his Blindness (Milton).

16: Sonnet: "Let me not to the marriage of true minds" (Shakespeare). The Hound of Heaven (Thompson). The Lake Isle of Innisfree (Yeats). 15: To Night (Shelley). Ode on the Intimations of Immortality (Wordsworth). 14: Home Thoughts from Abroad (Browning). 13: For the Fallen (Binyon).

12: The Tiger (Blake). She Walks in Beauty (Byron). Leisure (Davies). La Belle Dame sans Merci (Keats). Sea Fever (Masefield). L'Allegro (Milton). To a Skylark (Shelley).

11: Heracleitus (Cory). The Old Ships (Flecker). Recessional (Kipling). Renouncement (Meynell). The Blessed Damozel (Rossetti). O Mistress Mine (Shakespeare). Tears, Idle Tears (Tennyson). In No Strange Land (Thompson). When you are Old (Yeats).

10: Prospice (Browning). The Ways of Love (E. B. Browning). The Isles of Greece (Byron). Farewell (De la Mare). To Celia (Jonson). If (Kipling). Il Penseroso (Milton). "Shall I compare thee . . ."

(Shakespeare). Daffodils (Wordsworth). The World (Wordsworth).

9: The New Jerusalem (Blake). All Beauteous Things (Bridges). "If thou must love me . . ." (E. B. Browning). Into Battle (Grenfell). Cargoes (Masefield). Music when soft voices die (Shelley). Ulysses (Tennyson). The Lady of Shalott (Tennyson). Crossing the Bar (Tennyson).

8: Tarantella (Belloc). The Great Lover (Brooke). To a Mouse (Burns). O my Luv's like a Red, Red Rose (Burns). The Kingfisher (Davies). Death, be not Proud (Donne). Cynara (Dowson). Cradle Song (Colum). In Time of the Breaking of Nations (Hardy). To Lucasta (Lovelace). To his Coy Mistress (Marvell). Requiem (Stevenson). "When to the Sessions of sweet, silent Thought" (Shakespeare). The Reaper (Wordsworth). The Cloths of Heaven (Yeats).

7: Courtesy (Belloc). London Snow (Bridges). The Rolling English Road (Chesterton). The Journey of the Magi (Eliot). The Golden Road to Samarkand (Flecker). To a Poet a thousand years hence (Flecker). Invictus (Henley). Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries (Housman). Loveliest of Trees (Housman). The Way through the Wood (Kipling). To Helen (Poe). "When in disgrace with fortune . . ." (Shakespeare). Ozymandias (Shelley). The Hounds of Spring (Swinburne). Break, break, break (Tennyson). Song of the Lotos Eaters (Tennyson).

6: The Night has a Thousand Eyes (Bourdillon). The Dead (Brooke). Abt Vogler (Browning). So we'll go no more a-roving (Byron). Yasmin (Flecker). Counsel to Girls (Herrick). Jenny kissed me (Leigh Hunt). The Old Familiar Faces (Lamb). In Flanders Fields (McCrae). Anthem for Doomed Youth (Owen). Remember me (Christina Rossetti). I think continually (Spender). The Seed Shop (Stuart). The Forsaken Merman (Arnold).

Some Runners-up—

To Lamb (Blake). Auguries of Innocence (Blake). The Passer By (Bridges). All that's past (De la Mare). They are not long (Dowson). Brumara (Flecker). Love (Herbert). Beauty (Masefield). Shepherdess of Sheep (Meynell). For Johnny (Pudney). Death, the Léveller (Shirley). Encouragement to Lovers (Suckling). Addlestrop (Thomas). Peace (Vaughan).

Some comment is obvious. It may be said that all these poems are "hackneyed," but a poem only becomes hackneyed from being popular and, as the purpose of this enquiry is to find the 100 most popular poems, it would be strange if any of these were not, in fact, hackneyed. Many compilers of lists were honest in their choice to the point of citing poems so difficult to find that it was highly improbable that more than one or two people would cite them, and the final list has inevitably been made up of the well-known poems which formed the bulk of every list. How these in turn were chosen from the works of each poet, I know not, but it is fairly obvious that the better known anthologies are largely

answerable. Whether or not anthologies are desirable is a matter of opinion, but it is fairly obvious that the poems which appear in most anthologies are all that a great many readers know about the work of that particular poet. One of these days, I will ask the Editor's permission to have a competition in these pages on exactly the opposite lines, and ask contributors to send in lists, with copies where necessary, of their favourite "Treasure-trove," the lesser known poems which, in their opinion, ought to be better known.

Turning to the list itself, one of the most remarkable facts is that Keats has four poems in the first 12 and yet only 19 of his poems were cited. Browning, on the other hand, was mentioned in nearly every list and had 49 poems cited against 37 by Shelley, De la Mare and Yeats, and about 30 by Wordsworth, Kipling and Masefield. Tennyson, Shakespeare and Rupert Brooke followed with about 27.

The balance between "old" and "new" poems was good, the selections from Shakespeare to Masefield being well spread out. The preference for "classical" over "modern" was startling. T. S. Eliot just got into the list with "The Journey of the Magi," and Spender comes in lower still with "I think continually of those." The rest were nowhere. Four of the last war poets are represented: Brooke, Grenfell, McCrae and Owen, and various "one-poem" poets, so described because when the poet was mentioned it was almost invariably for the one favourite poem. "Kubla Khan," Gray's "Elegy," Cory's "Heracleitus" and Laurence Binyon's "For the Fallen" are examples.

The omissions were even more startling, "A. E." Arnold, Cowper, Drinkwater, Hood, Hopkins, Longfellow, Newbolt and Noyes being unrepresented. Housman seems to have fallen in popularity, and Swinburne, "the rage of the Nineties," only just crept into the list with "The Hounds of Spring." If I am privately amazed at the absence of various poems, such as "Lovesight" (D. G. Rosetti), "Everyone Sang" (Sassoon). "Reincarnation" (Eva Gore-booth), and Swinburne's "Before Dawn," I can let them loose in the suggested Treasure-trove.

And now for publication. There is much to be done in copying out the poems and acquiring permission, in many cases, to include the chosen poems in our anthology. Here, however, is your collective choice and, when the time comes, we shall look to you to buy in quantity, for yourself and friends, the product of your choosing.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

OMEGA (For E.V.F.)

He is gone, the old scholar, the venerable old man,
and his epic, like all Odysseys, come to an end.
Dweller upon Olympus, he yet walked citizen
of all cities, counting as incomparable friend

the myriad; not the puritan only nor the proud,
but people of no moment—sinner and clown
whose burden was his patient Atlas-load,
whose unspectacular battle, his Marathon.

Mourn not; only if the goodness of all men
were committed to ash, justice and love forfeited
like coffin to the irrevocable flame, Oh then,
my poem were a lament and he at last dead.

MURIEL SPARK.

Announcing Progress

For many years *The Poetry Review* has borne heavily increased production costs without advancing the advertising rates, in spite of materially larger sales.

Today *The Poetry Review* offers advertisers better value and a larger circulation than ever before.

Revision of the rate for advertising space is now essential and it has been decided that, commencing with the January-February 1948 issue, the charge will be £15 per page et pro rata, ordinary position £18, preferred position and for outside back cover page, when available, £20.

These rates will be subject to series discounts of 2½ per cent for 3, 5 per cent for 6 and 10 per cent for 12 insertions respectively. Publishers' discount will be 10 per cent and recognised Advertising Agents' commission will be 15 per cent.

Unexpired contracts will be completed on existing terms.

All enquiries concerning Advertising should be addressed to:—

The Advertisement Manager,

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Galloway Kyle

It has been suggested by some members of the Poetry Society that a presentation fund be started on the occasion of the retirement of Mr. Galloway Kyle, the former Director of the Society and Editor of this journal. The following subscribers to the fund are acknowledged :—

Mr. Howard Parsons; Mr. P. E. A. Lever; Miss Rose Fee

Will members who are interested please communicate with the General Secretary, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London W. 1.

Poetry Review

Poetry Review will appear bi-monthly as usual, but to avoid confusion, instead of being dated *January-February*, *March-April*, etc., will appear in future simply as *February*, *April*, *June*, *August*, *October* or *December* editions.

Submission to the Editor

Manuscripts may be submitted to the Editor, *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, London W.1., for consideration in the ordinary way apart from entries for competitions. Such MSS. should be typewritten, or if this is impossible, printed legibly, and if their return is desired should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. The Editor can accept no responsibility for the safety of MSS. although every care will be taken to ensure this. Acceptance will not imply immediate publication; payment will be made upon publication.

The Poetry Society's Critical Service

This service continues to grow in popularity but it has been found necessary to amend slightly the terms upon which it is available to members. A minimum fee of 5s. will be charged in future and two poems only may be submitted for this sum. Additional poems will cost 2s. each for criticism and it is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed as this is as much in the author's interest as in the critics.

Poetry of Today

Enquiries are still being received from contributors to *Poetry of Today* regarding the publication of poems which have been accepted for that journal. Those poems for which there was no space in *Poetry of Today* 75 will appear in No. 76 or No. 77 which it is hoped will appear this year.

Owing to the paper and labour shortages the Poetry Society is compelled to discontinue publication of *Poetry of Today* until further notice. Contributors whose poems have been accepted in the last few months will be notified individually.

The Library of the Poetry Society

The comprehensive poetry library of 10,000 books at 33 Portman Square has recently been reorganizedby the very able Honorary Librarian Mr. H. K. Grant, a member of the Executive of the Society. Members wishing to use the library or to borrow books from it may communicate with Mr. Grant between the hours of 12 noon and 5 p.m. on any weekday.

The Anglo-Italian Literary Society has recently handed over its very fine library of Italian classical and modern works for our use, and students of Italian literature are especially recommended to study this collection.

The Librarian would welcome members who wish to make use of the fine books in the Society's possession and hopes that the library may now fulfill its proper function.

The Premium Competition

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Editor. There is no entrance fee but competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped and addressed envelope will be required. See Rule 3.
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as none will be returned in future.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Editor," *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, London W.1.

5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address and the words "For Premium Competition closing ——— 1st."
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.

The closing dates for the six bi-monthly Premium Competitions will be until further notice, February 1st, April 1st, June 1st, August 1st, October 1st and December 1st.

The Love Lyric Competition

This annual competition offers £10 for an original love lyric. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. Not more than two poems may be entered by each competitor.
2. The length of an entry must not exceed thirty lines.
3. Entries must be typewritten, bear the name and address of the author and be addressed "Love Lyric Competition," The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London W.1.
4. The Competition will close on 31st December.
5. The Society reserves the right to publish any poem submitted, in *The Poetry Review*, but without prejudice to the author's right of publication elsewhere later.
6. Competitors must be members of the Poetry Society.
7. No stamped addressed envelope is required since no entries will be returned.

Competitors should keep copies of their poems.

The Greenwood Prize for 1948

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for 1948 for the best single poem in open competition. Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize," 33 Portman Square, London W.1." and must be received before July 31st. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed. (if a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym.) The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Poetry Society, the adjudicator may reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

THE CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (NOW AFFILIATED TO THE POETRY SOCIETY)

Dame Sybil Thorndike has graciously consented to be President of the Chelsea Poetry Circle which was formed a year ago by six poetry lovers who felt they would like to arrange some informal readings in their own homes for those who cared for poetry in Chelsea.

They held their first Public Reading at 96 Cheyne Walk, the lovely Georgian House of Whistler. Miss Margaret Rutherford read a selection of Walter de la Mare's poetry, from the poet's personal choice.

The series of monthly informal readings showed that the demand was greater than they had hoped, so it was decided to affiliate with the Poetry Society, and it is by their co-operation that the Poetry Circle are enabled to arrange occasional public functions in addition to their regular Sunday Circle meetings.

They have their Readings planned for the winter, and welcome all poetry lovers to any meeting, whether public or circle, if they would notify the Hon. Secretary of their intention to be present.

Hon. Secretary : John E. Carroll, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

Programme for the remainder of this year: Sunday, December 7th, Public Reading, Margaret Rawlings; Sunday, December 14th, Private Reading at 5 Key House, 39 Gleve Place, Chelsea.

ROMFORD CENTRE OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of the Romford Centre of The Poetry Society was held at The Church House, Wykeham Hall, Market Place, Romford, on Thursday, October 9th, with Mrs. E. Milford (Vice-President) in the chair.

A most satisfactory year of progress was recorded, with two special events—the Second Annual Social and Supper, and the First Poetry Competition—interspersing the monthly meetings consisting mainly of talks, visits from similar societies, and Centre readings. Attendances during the year averaged 16, with 22 and 23 being the highest.

There were 33 entries in the Competition, and the Secretary reported that he had just received a letter from America requesting details of eligibility, etc., for the Competition! During the year members have received verse-speaking awards and the 1st, 3rd and 4th places in The Hornchurch Music Society's Festival, and the 2nd and 3rd in the Harold Wood Eisteddfod were secured (Original Poems Section), besides many other individual acceptances and publications.

Mrs. E. Brooks (one of the new Vice-Presidents) received a vote of thanks for her (and her husband's) hospitality on many occasions.

The officers and committee are now as follows:

President: Alfred Tennyson, Esq.; Vice-Presidents: Miss K. Balbernie, Mrs. E. Brooks, Mrs. E. Milford, L. Challoner, Esq., and Capt. A. J. Dyer, Esq.; Chairman: Dr. A. P. Draper; Vice-Chairman: Mr. L. Wood; Hon. Sec. and Treasurer: Mr. T. Astore; Recording Secretary: Miss G. E. Lattimer; Committee members: Miss K. M. Chaplin, Mrs. P. M. Davidson and Mrs. N. Hawkes.

The address of the Secretary—who will welcome inquiries—is 13, Faircross Avenue, Romford.

HAMPSTEAD CENTRE OF THE POETRY SOCIETY (INC.)

Programme of Meetings to be held at 9, Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3, by invitation of Miss Margaret Huntsman, on first and third Tuesdays from 8 to 9.30 p.m.

M. H. Huntsman (Hon. Sec.), 9, Wentworth Mansions, N.W.3.

Dec. 2. Ballads and Sonnets.
,, 16. No meeting.
1948
Jan. 6. Celtic Poets.
,, 20. Robert Nichols ; arranged by Miss Pamela Nicholl.

Feb.	3.	Wit and Wisdom in the reign of Queen Anne ; preceded by the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
,,	17.	"The Frogs", by Aristophanes. (Gilbert Murray's translation)
Mar.	2.	Narrative Verse, introduced by Mr. P. H. Eaton.
,,	16.	Emily Bronte and Evelyn Underhill.
Apl.	6.	No meeting.
,,	20.	J. Elroy Flecker and Laurence Binyon.
May	4.	Means of Transport.
,,	18.	No meeting.
June	1.	"The Testament of Beauty," by Robert Bridges : arranged by Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins.
,,	15.	Fairies, Ghosts and Goblins.
July	6.	Historical Subjects.
,,	20.	Favourite Poems.

It will be considerate of Members to choose poems taking not longer than five minutes, to ensure that all have equal opportunity ; and also to keep introductory papers to within fifteen minutes.

LUNCH-HOUR POETRY READINGS

Regular public poetry readings in London are being given at Kingsway Hall every Thursday at 1.15 p.m. by Alan Phillips, Reader of the Poetry Society.

BRITISH ANNUAL OF LITERATURE PRIZE

The prize offered by the *British Annual of Literature* for the best short poem has been won by Mr. E. B. W. Chappelow. The medal offered for the best volume of poetry submitted in 1946 was not awarded. The closing date for the next competitions, as announced in the *Annual* for 1947, is March 1st, for entries from Great Britain and Ireland, and June 1st for entries from overseas.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines continually increases. In 1946 a record was established both in the number of auditions held and the number of entrants heard therein.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the coveted award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions have recently been revised. Copies may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges or private individuals. Applications for audition dates should be made as long as possible beforehand.

THE POETRY HOUR AT 33 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1

Readings, recitals or lectures on poetry are held weekly at 33 Portman Square, London W.1. The following programme has been arranged.

November 21st at 8 p.m. Alan Wheatley reading a selection of modern poetry, including the works of T. S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis Macniece.

November 28th at 5 p.m. Laura Smithson. A recital: Whom The Gods Loved.

December 5th at 8 p.m. Lesley Deane. A Personal Selection.

December 12th at 5 p.m. John Arlot reading a selection of his own poems.

December 19th at 8 p.m. Arnold Vincent Bowen. A reading of poems.